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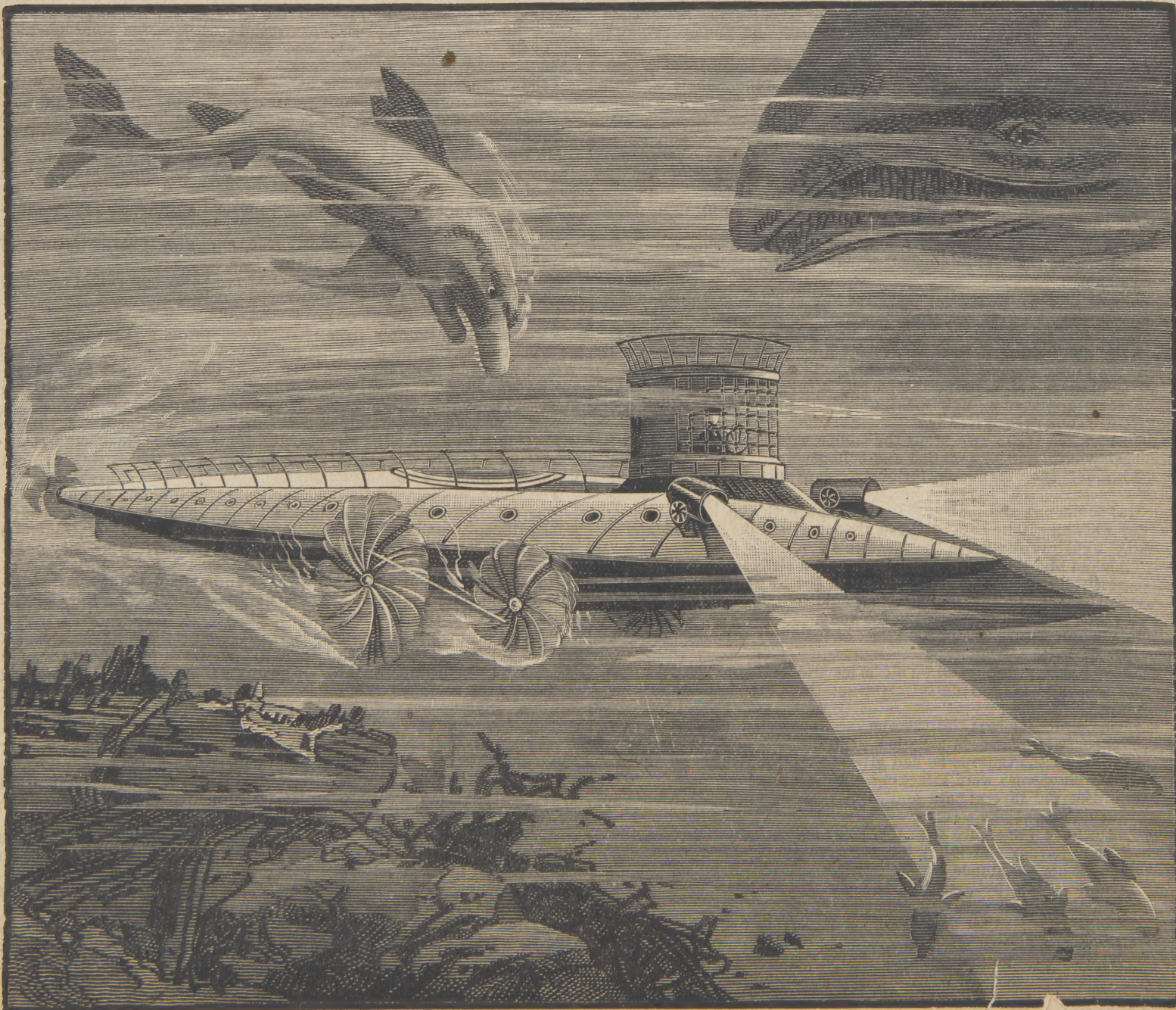
Vol. III

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Frank Reade, Jr.,

And His Electric Sea Engine; or,
HUNTING FOR A SUNKEN DIAMOND MINE.

By "NONAME."



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Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Sea Engine;

OR,

HUNTING FOR A SUNKEN DIAMOND MINE.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Cruiser of the Lakes," "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Prairie Schooner," "From Zone to Zone," "The Black Range," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIG DIAMOND.

THE beautiful western city of Readestown was named after a noted inventor of wonderful steam contrivances named Frank Reade.

Having grown wealthy and old, this celebrated man had given up inventing and traveling and settled down to a quiet, domestic life.

A son of his, named Frank Reade, Jr., had not only inherited his talent, but far surpassed the old gentleman in the line of invention.

Frank Reade, Jr., was a tall, dashing fellow, with muscles of steel, a plucky disposition, and wore a dark, curling mustache.

He resided in a mansion with walled in grounds in which stood the great machine shops and construction rooms wherein the marvelous inventions of his brain were developed.

A comical little old coon named Pomp and a rollicking, red-headed Irishman called Barney O'Shea always attended the young inventor on the perilous trips he made with his inventions.

On a pleasant day in October Frank was busy in the workshop constructing an electric sea engine in the form of a submarine boat with which he intended to explore the bottom of the ocean.

In the midst of his work he was suddenly startled by hearing a wild piercing cry for help coming from somewhere outside the building.

Dropping his hammer and leaving the sea engine, he rushed out and again heard the shout in the tones of a man coming from the direction of a country road to the westward of the grounds.

There was a door in the stone wall and Frank rushed up to it, flung it open and ran out to see who was in trouble.

Observing a violent agitation among the weeds bordering the road, he dashed up to the spot and beheld a man struggling in the hands of four ruffians.

"You shall not rob me!" he heard the victim shout in frantic tones; "I'll die before I'll give you that diamond!"

"Kill him!" yelled one of the tramp-like looking men savagely.

"Blast him!" cried another. "Finish him quick or his yells will bring the police buzzing about our ears."

Three of them were holding the fiercely struggling young man, and the other brandished an ugly looking knife to plunge it into their victim when Frank rushed forward.

Before he had taken two steps the ruffian with the knife plunged it into their victim and he groaned and collapsed.

"Villains!" shouted Frank, furiously. "Would you commit murder!"

"Ha! someone's coming!" gasped the man with the knife.

They were all startled and glanced around at the inventor in alarm. Bang! went Frank's fist in the assassin's eye.

It knocked him flat on his back for it was a sledge-hammer blow.

Fearlessly the young inventor sprang at the three others.

They dropped their victim, who staggered and fell bleeding to the ground from a sickening wound in his body.

In an instant Frank was in the midst of the gang and his powerful fists shot out with terrific force.

Yells and curses resounded on all sides and rendered desperate by the fear that the young inventor might get the best of them, the rascals closed in on him.

Surrounded by the four, for the one he knocked down had arisen, the inventor was placed in a critical position.

Infuriated by the thumps he had given them, the rascals had drawn knives and clubs, and were attacking him viciously.

Frank received several cuts and sundry blows upon the head and body, but he fought like a tiger.

It might have gone hard with the nerry fellow had it not been for the fact that Barney and Pomp had followed him from the shop, and now came to his assistance.

"Whoop!" yelled the Irishman, flourishing a shillelah. "It's murderin' Masther Frank they bes, Pomp. Come on wid ye! Shtop that yez shtroiped hoyenas, or beheavens I'll shtrew ther ground wid yez coorpsees, so I will!"

And up to the ruffians rushed the Celt like a whirlwind.

Crack—bang! went his blackthorn upon their heads, and the murderous rascals scattered from around Frank, giving him a chance to use his fists again.

The diminutive ducky was close at the Irishman's heels.

"Clar de track!" he roared. "Heah come de bullgine! When I hits somefin's boun' ter fall. Wow—golly! Take dat, yo' rascal!"

And butting the nearest man in the stomach with his woolly head with the force of a battering ram, Pomp made him give a sudden gasp, double up, and go down like a log.

Then a lively fight ensued.

Frank punched the ruffians.

Barney broke their heads with his stick.

And Pomp butted them like an enraged goat.

In less than two minutes the whole gang was knocked out.

Every one of them lay prone on the ground, one nursing a broken nose, the other tenderly rubbing a dislocated jaw, the third gasping furiously for breath, and the last insensible from a thump on the head.

Frank critically surveyed the battlefield.

"They are ours. Tie them up and we'll put them in jail," said he.

While the Irishman and the coon were so employed, the inventor approached the victim of the ruffians.

He was senseless and very pale, bleeding from a bad wound, and might have died had Frank not bandaged the cut, thus stanching the flow of blood.

By the time the young inventor had finished attending to the wounded man, Barney and Pomp had the ruffians bound.

The injured man was very poorly clad, and wore a scrub growth of sandy beard upon his thin, sunburned face.

He seemed to be about thirty years of age, and had rather aquiline features that betrayed great privation and suffering.

Unfortunately his breath smelt like liquor.

"Some poor miserable tramp," muttered Frank. "I wonder what he meant by saying he would not allow them to rob him of a diamond? Where would he get a diamond? He looks like a tramp in that patched, threadbare suit, those burst shoes, old felt hat, and red flannel shirt. But—ha! What's that?"

Just then he saw something sparkle in the man's hand.

Forcing it away, for the stranger had his hands clenched tightly, the young inventor was startled and amazed to see that it was a rough diamond almost as big as a walnut.

The stone was pure white, and certainly worth about \$50,000.

"Great Heavens! Where did this forlorn looking wretch get such a magnificent diamond?" flashed across Frank's mind. "Could he have stolen it? Was he one of this gang of tramps? Were they fighting to wrest it from one of their own friends?"

"Bagorra," said Barney, "it's foine jewels that fellow bes after sportin' wid thim aould clothes. Is he ther loikes av a king in disguise?"

"There is some strange, deep mystery connected with this case," replied Frank. "And I shall solve it, too. Run for a police wagon and have these tramps locked up, while Pomp guards them, and I will carry the wounded man home. He needs medical attendance, or will die. Say nothing of the diamond to any one."

This order was carried out.

As soon as Barney was gone Pomp posted himself on guard over the tramps, and Frank carried the wounded man home.

The police took the murderous four away, and when Barney and Pomp reached the house they found a doctor attending to the wounded man. The chief of the police was with them.

"The wound is not serious," said the physician. "The knife blade did not touch a vital spot. He will soon recover. Had the weapon deviated half an inch, he would have been killed."

"An escape by a very narrow margin," commented Frank, as the doctor took his leave. "I'm glad it is no worse."

"Thim spalpeens wot made a pin cushion av him, sor, is behoid ther bars," said Barney, solemnly, "an' here be's ther chief av ther police ter get ther mon's ante-mortem statemint so as ter fill ther poor."

divil wid j'y ather [he doies be hangin' his murderers fer ther croime."

The wounded man had revived, and the chief asked him:

"What is your name, age and residence?"

"My name is Oscar Hunt. I am thirty years old. I have no home," the stranger replied, in a straightforward manner.

"What is your occupation?"

"I have none; I was a sailor on the wrecked ship, *Ida C. Ray*."

"Have you any relatives?"

"None whatever."

"What is your nationality?"

"American. I was born in New York city."

"Who were the men who assaulted you?"

"I do not know any of them; they were tramps."

"What was their object in attacking you?"

"I went into a liquor saloon to get a drink. There I foolishly exposed a large diamond I owned. They saw it, and when I left Readestown to tramp out in the country to get a job as a farm hand they followed me, and attacked me to steal the diamond. And they got it."

"You are mistaken. All were searched at the police station, but no diamond was in the possession of any of them."

"Then it must be lost at the place of the fight."

"How came you to be in Readestown?"

"After being wrecked I was picked up and carried to New York. There I boarded a train and was carried to this place. I was told of a farmer who would employ me not far from here."

"Where did you get the diamond?"

"From a mine on an island in the Indian Ocean. That isle, owing to an earthquake, sunk under the sea shortly after I left it on a ship. I was friendless and penniless. If I dared to try to sell such a valuable diamond, people would think I stole it. I therefore was poor, and yet very well off."

"Well, yours is a queer case. On your evidence I will give those tramps a long term in prison."

And getting Oscar Hunt to sign an affidavit against the four ruffians, the chief of police took his departure.

CHAPTER II.

THE STORY OF A SHIPWRECK.

THE brief explanation Oscar Hunt had made the chief of police of the manner in which he procured the big diamond, excited Frank's curiosity, and he said to the patient:

"I wish you would tell me more about yourself, sir."

"You have been very kind to me," replied Hunt, earnestly. "I am a very grateful man, for I remember enough about that fight to know that I owe you my life. I will do anything you ask."

"I do not wish to pry into your private business, but what you have mentioned to the chief of police has made me curious, more especially as I have saved your diamond for you, and here it is."

He handed the sufferer the big gem.

Oscar Hunt eagerly grasped it.

"I am glad those tramps did not get the stone," said he, "for now I can show my appreciation of what you have done for me. Take the diamond, sir, and keep it as a token of my gratitude."

"Oh, no!" replied Frank, smilingly. "I am rich—I do not want it. You need it a great deal more than I do."

"That stone is as useless to me as a piece of granite. If I were to attempt to sell it, I'd be arrested on suspicion of having stolen it. Beside, sir, I know where there are hundreds more of them lying at the bottom of the Indian Ocean."

He spoke in tones of such sincerity, that Frank saw he told the truth.

And such being the truth, this man was possessed of a secret which was worth a fabulous fortune to him, if he were to go and get the diamonds from their hiding-place in the sea.

"You amaze me," said the young inventor.

"It may sound like a lie," said Oscar Hunt, bluntly, "but, of course, it matters little to me what people think. I like you for saving my life, I say, and I therefore would not tell you a falsehood. Let me make my meaning clearer by telling you about the matter, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Reade—Frank Reade, Jr."

"Frank Reade, Jr.! Why—are you the great inventor of air ships, overland engines, and submarine boats, that the newspapers have been mentioning so much for the past few years?"

"I am the inventor you mention."

"Thunder! I never expected to have the pleasure of meeting such a celebrated man as you are, sir, although when I reached this town I knew very well you lived here. Well, as I was going to tell you my history I'll go ahead."

"I am all attention."

"To begin then, let me explain that I was left an orphan when a boy, and having taken a liking to the life of a sailor, I got a position aboard of a ship. I had a varied experience as a sailor for fifteen years. The last craft I sailed in as a foremast hand was the *Ida C. Ray*. She was bound from New York to Calcutta. One evening I had a row with the captain, who was an ugly rascal, and it might have gone hard with me had not a storm of great violence just then come up.

"We were then off the coast of India ten miles, in the neighborhood of Lake Chilka. The ship struck on a rock and stove in the bow. She began to sink. The men took to the boats. I was not allowed to join them by the captain, who was spiteful against me. The boats vanished in the gloom. I was left alone on the sinking

wreck. For several hours I was tossed about at the mercy of the wind and waves. Then the ship struck again. The lightning showed me that it was upon an island. Here she went to pieces. I was cast ashore by the waves.

"On the following day the storm cleared away. I found myself on a small island about twenty miles from a coast, upon which I could faintly see a mountain in a state of eruption. This mountain was of peculiar formation, for it looked very much like the upper part of an enormous jet black cross."

"A singular shape," Frank commented as Hunt paused.

"Yes; but it will serve as a landmark some day when I go back there to locate the island. At any rate, I found myself upon a small isle of peculiar formation. Its top crust consisted of sand, gravel and loam, eighteen inches below it a layer of stiff black clay four feet thick, and beneath that a layer of ferruginous sandstone, or conglomerate, and in this were numerous big diamonds, of which this is one. I discovered this in a split in the ground."

"At first I was frantic with joy over my discovery of this wonderful diamond field, and I spent the whole day gathering them in a heap, which I finally buried under a rock. But when the pangs of hunger assailed me, and I found no food on the desolate isle, I forgot my great treasure. Several days passed by, and I had no food or water. I was starving to death."

"Horrible, horrible!" said Frank, pityingly.

"Well, on the fourth day I sighted a ship and in my wild anxiety I rushed into the sea and screaming at the top of my voice I struck out for her. No sooner had I left the isle when an earthquake shock occurred. The island sunk to a depth of what looked like thirty or forty feet, for I could clearly see it down below when the agitated waters subsided. I swam and shrieked until I was exhausted. My strength began to wane. Presently I lost my senses. When I finally came to I found myself on the ship. Her crew had heard and seen me. I was picked up at the last moment and was saved. It proved to be the American ship *Thetis*, bound for New York. I told the captain my story of wreckage, but kept the knowledge of the sunken diamond mine a secret and found that I had only saved one stone—this one. How I chanced to drop in into my pocket I do not remember. I kept it hidden. It was useless to me. I got what little money was due to me from the owners of the *Ida C. Ray*, and disgusted with a sea-faring life advertised and was offered a position as a farm hand near Readestown. I was on my way to take it when I fell in with the four tramps about whose murderous attack you already know."

Oscar Hunt paused.

Frank was amazed at his story.

"So that's how it happened, eh?" he asked.

"That is the true story of my adventures."

"Remarkable! Your description of the sort of bed in which you found the diamonds shows me conclusively that you have made no error. Diamonds only occur in such soil as you have described. I have every faith in your story. But I'd like to know if you think you could find that sunken diamond mine if you were to go in search of it, as you say you intend doing?"

"Very easily!" emphatically declared Hunt.

"Now suppose I were to offer to carry you there and get some of those gems—would you be willing to divide the profits with my two friends here and myself?"

"Of course I would," was the eager reply. "But it would be a very expensive voyage. Diving suits and apparatus would be needed."

"My friend, I am at present building a new submarine sea engine which would be magnificently adapted to the work required. If you wish to enter into an agreement to use her to go after the sunken diamond mine when she is finished I will assume all the expense and risk, and shall only ask you to accompany me and point out the place where the sunken island lies."

"Luck favors me!" cried Hunt, delightedly. "I accept your offer, and will gladly share or pay all the expense if you will dispose of this diamond, since you will not take it as a present."

"We will say no more about that now, then," said Frank, "you get well. In the meantime my friends and I will finish building the sea engine. If she turns out as successful as her model was we will go on this voyage, eh, boys?"

"Wid all me heart," assented Barney.

"Fo' suah, chile," Pomp added.

So that point was settled.

It delighted the wounded man.

Frank and his two friends then left him.

Returning to the shops, they resumed their work on the new wonder, and stuck to it until nightfall.

Then they came in to supper.

Barney and Pomp were inveterate practical jokers.

Although greatly devoted to Frank, and thinking a great deal of each other, they were forever playing jokes on each other.

When the Irishman finished his supper, he lit his old clay pipe, and getting his hat, he strolled out in the yard.

Pomp was sitting on an iron chair against the workshop playing a tune on a banjo, and the moment Barney spied the coon, he stole into the building and took two copper wires from a series of storage batteries, and crept over to a window above the darky's head.

He made a hook in the uninsulated ends of the wires, poked them out the window, caught them on the back of the metal chair, and a current of electricity was communicated to it.

The moment it struck Pomp, the coon gave a yell, bounced up in the air, dropped his banjo, and came down on the seat with a thud.

"Murda!" he yelled. "Wha'—wha'—wha'—wha' dat?"

His hands came down on the chair and were glued there.

He could not let go in spite of his efforts.

"Gosh a'mighty! Ise full ob pins an' needles!" he howled.

He struggled and squirmed, and made horrible faces, and Barney uttered a roar of laughter as he strolled out of the shop.

"What's t'her matter, nagur?" he asked blandly. "Throwin' a fit?"

"Ise on flah! Jerusalem de golden—take me away!" bellowed Pomp.

"Shall I play ther hose on yez?"

"No, no! Glory halleluyah! Doan yo' see Ise stuck?"

And poor Pomp began to kick and squirm furiously.

Barney fairly screamed with laughter to see the comical antics of the little coon, and then the truth flashed over Pomp's mind.

He reached out his foot and kicked Barney on the shins.

"Yo' done dat!" he roared.

"Be heavens I'm kilt!" yelled the Celt.

His legs flew from under him and he pitched over toward the coon, when his hands came in contact with the chair.

Then he got a shock, for he was caught in his own trap.

He couldn't let go either, and howled worse than Pomp.

In a moment more both the coon and the Celt were kicking and yelling together as the electricity flew through them, and a sicker looking pair it would have been hard to find.

CHAPTER III.

A FATAL TRIAL.

THE furious uproar made by the coon and the Irishman was heard by some of Frank's mechanics in the shop, and they came rushing out to ascertain the cause of the disturbance.

As soon as they saw Barney and Pomp furiously struggling, they imagined that they were fighting, and several of the most peaceably inclined ran up to separate them.

No sooner had they put their hands on the pair when they too were shocked by the electric current, and could not let go.

Howling, jumping and squirming, they added to the confusion and uproar, much to the amazement of those who had not done anything to stop the supposed fight.

This might have continued a long time had not Barney seen how matters stood, and yelled to one of the men:

"Hey, Jim! come here!"

"What do you want?" asked the man addressed.

"Unhook ther woire from ther back av this chair."

The mechanic complied and the current was broken.

As soon as this occurred the four men no longer felt the electricity, and were able to let go the metal chair.

They did not wait to say a word, but scattering, they rushed off in all directions, and quickly vanished from view.

As Barney had suffered as much as Pomp, they did not discuss the question after that, but let the matter drop.

Frank continued his work upon the sea-engine, and at the end of two weeks, the wonderful vessel was completed.

In the meantime Oscar Hunt had rapidly recovered from his wound, and by the time the submarine craft was finished he was up and around again, and prosecuted the four tramps.

They were sentenced to long terms in prison.

On the day the sea-engine was finished, Frank met the sailor in the yard and shouted to him:

"Say, Hunt, come in here, and I'll show you my new invention."

He always maintained the utmost privacy while constructing his peculiar contrivances, never permitting them to be seen until they were completed, and secured by patents.

The sailor had been very curious about this machine, and therefore was delighted at the prospect of seeing her.

Frank led him to a walled reservoir next to the construction room, in which the craft had been built, and in this sheet of water floated the new invention.

The reservoir was connected by a canal with a river that flowed to the sea.

The sea engine was named the Clipper.

She was a flat cone, one hundred and fifty feet long, twenty-five feet wide, and fifteen feet deep, tapered to a point at each end, had a pilot-house in front, a railed deck, and a trap-door in the middle of it.

At the bow an immense sharp blade was secured, there was a big electric search-light on each side of the turret, a pair of paddle-wheels were on either side of the hull, and at the stern was the rudder and a propeller.

Numerous oblong bull's-eyes broke the sloping sides of the oval deck, while along the keel were a number of water valves.

The boat was made of finely tempered steel plates an inch thick, stretched over a frame of steel of the most massive build, designed to withstand an enormous water pressure.

Even the glass in the pilot-house window was an inch thick, and made in small squares, in order to gain strength.

Oscar Hunt gazed at this marvelous engine in astonishment.

"With all my experience with ships," said he, "I have never seen anything like this before in my life."

"She certainly is an oddity," Frank laughed, "but then the work expected of her is far different from that which you are accustomed to, for she can descend five hundred feet under water, and travel there in safety for a week at a time."

"This is extraordinary. How do you do it?"

"Come aboard, and I'll show you."

They crossed a gang-plank to the deck.

Passing through the open trap, they descended a short flight of metal stairs into a small, round, metal lined compartment.

There were two levers on the walls, and several valves in the floor.

"This is the exit chamber," said Frank, explanatorily. "Under the sea, if we wish to leave the interior in a diving costume we enter this room and pull one of those levers. It opens a valve admitting the sea water. As soon as the room is full the diver is accustomed to the surrounding sea pressure and can go out without feeling the change. When he comes in and closes the trap, he pulls this second lever. That puts a pump in operation emptying the water out. When it is all out, you can open this door and enter the living rooms."

"How ingenious!"

"Follow me!"

Frank pushed the door open.

They were in a passage and walked aft into a big room.

It contained an engine such as a steamship carries excepting that such parts were missing as were acted upon by water and steam.

This machinery turned the paddle wheels and screw.

It was worked by an electric motor deriving its force from innumerable big storage batteries ranged against the walls.

This room was illuminated by electric incandescent lamps, as were the other apartments, the currents for which came from a machine standing in the middle of the room.

The ceiling was strung with mazes of insulated copper wires for carrying the electric currents to all working parts.

An air pump, a water pump, a dynamo, an oil engine, and a series of belts, fly wheels, electric motors and shafts made up the rest of the contents of the room.

"This is the engine room," said Frank.

"Complicated," commented the puzzled sailor.

"On the contrary, very simple to one understanding electricity."

"That's the point."

"Come this way."

Frank made his way up forward.

The first room after passing the exit chamber was a store room for holding water, provisions, ship chandlery, tools, diving suits, arms and ammunition, and duplicate parts of the vessel.

Forward of this room was a kitchen, pantry and mess room combined, an electric range for the cooking, and motor fan wheels to keep the room cool.

A door from here led into the turret, which contained several bunks, handsome furniture, a steering wheel, a compass that could be used under the sea, a number of electrical and meteorological registers, and a switchboard for controlling the electric currents.

By means of this arrangement the pilot governed the engine.

Frank explained the use of everything to the sailor.

Then he added in conclusion:

"But one thing more needs explanation; then you will know all about the Clipper. She has three compartments in the hold. The ones in the bow and stern are filled with air under pressure, which is kept cool and wholesome by a solution of potash, lime and water. This air is automatically fed to the living rooms, as we need it, and the vitiated carbonic acid gas, from breathing it, is carried off into the water by valves. The center reservoir is a water chamber for ballasting the sea engine so as to sink her to any depth. Enough water is let in to overcome the buoyancy of the air in the forward and after reservoirs. That sinks her. If I wish to raise her I let out some of the water, and the air carries her to the surface."

"It is a wonderful arrangement, Mr. Reade."

"Would you like to see how it works?"

"By all means."

"Then I'll send her to the bed of the reservoir."

Frank glanced at the register dial of the air chambers, and saw that there was enough atmosphere compressed in the reservoirs to last an hour or more, and then pulled a lever opening the water valve.

As soon as the midship reservoir began to fill the boat sunk.

Down she went to the bottom of the pool, and a dense gloom began to pervade the interior.

Frank turned on the electric lights.

They shed a brilliant glow through the boat.

He next turned the current into the search-lights, and a silvery glow immediately filled the water ahead.

By turning one of the levers, he started the air injector working, and a cool, fresh atmosphere filled the sea engine.

The Clipper paused on the bottom.

It was covered with mud.

The depth was thirty feet.

Fishes were swimming around the engine, and everything outside became as plain as if bathed in the sunlight.

A cry of astonishment pealed from Hunt's lips as he gazed out the window upon the moving vegetation growing among the rocks lining the bottom.

"I have never seen anything like this before!" he cried.

"Wait until we get out to sea!" said Frank. "This is nothing in comparison with the scenes you will then witness."

"Hark! What is that rumbling sound?"

"Good Heaven! Has any accident occurred?"

They both listened intently.

A dull roar reached their ears.

It caused a puzzled, uneasy look to cross Frank's face.

He cast a sharp glance up at the register and started violently when he observed the dial of the air-chambers.

"Anything gone wrong?" asked Hunt, who was watching him.

"The air is escaping from the reservoirs!" exclaimed Frank.

"How?" anxiously demanded the sailor.

"Into the water. That's what makes the roaring noise. We will soon have none to breathe. We must get to the top at once."

"Merciful powers, don't lose a moment then!"

Frank started the water pump, and tons of water were emptied from the sea-engine until it was all out.

But by the time this was done, all the air had escaped, and her two inmates were gasping stentoriously for breath.

"She won't rise, as she has no buoyancy!" gasped Frank, gloomily.

"Must we perish locked up in here?"

"No. We have one chance to escape. It is a desperate risk. But unless we attempt it we will certainly die!"

And Frank rushed from the turret followed by Hunt.

CHAPTER IV.

OFF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

REACHING the exit chamber Frank and his companion hastened in and closed the door, whereupon the young inventor said, in tasty tones:

"Our only course to reach the top is to open the trap above, hold our breath, get out into the pool, and ascend to the surface by moving our hands."

"Can we hold our breath long enough?"

"That's where the risk comes in."

"I'm ready to try it."

"Now look out!"

Frank ascended the stairs, and opened the trap.

In gushed a tremendous volume of brine.

As soon as it struck him he was knocked down.

It thundered the water with terrible force, filling the room.

Within a remarkably short space of time the entire place was flooded, and Frank and his companion, holding their breath, swiftly made their way up to the opening.

Fast as they moved the time seemed interminable.

When they reached the trap it seemed as if they must expire.

Their brains seemed on the verge of bursting, a dull roar sounded in their ears, and sparks seemed to flash before their eyes.

Frantically they reached the deck.

Then they started for the surface fifteen feet above.

Before they reached it they had to let their breath go.

Swallowing the brine they realized that they were drowning.

But just as all hope fled, and they began to writhe and struggle blindly, they emerged from the top.

Here they caught a breath of air.

Oh, how delicious and invigorating it seemed as they voraciously drank it in and lived and breathed again as they were wont to do!

The ecstasy of that moment more than compensated them for the mental torture they had been undergoing when drowning.

Swimming to the shore they clambered out of the pool, and sat on the ground gasping for breath and ejecting the brine they swallowed.

In a few minutes they recovered entirely and got upon their feet.

"We've won!" Frank exclaimed.

"This is better than strangling in the sea engine," said Hunt.

"Let us go to the house and change our clothing."

As they left the inclosure Frank met the foreman of his shops and telling him what had happened, he directed the man to have the Clipper raised immediately.

Then he went to the house with the sailor.

In the afternoon the foreman came in and said that the boat had been raised and examined, when it was discovered that the rivets in a seam above the garboard streak had come out.

The air had thus made its escape from the reservoirs.

Ordering the man to put bolts in the plates instead of rivets for security, Frank went to see how Hunt was faring.

The accident had not done any harm to his wound, so no serious consequences were to be feared.

"I presume you will now have such a dread of the Clipper that you will not care to venture on a submarine cruise in her?" said Frank, when he explained what happened.

"On the contrary, I am eager to go," replied the sailor. "I have every confidence in the sea engine. The quicker we start the better."

"Good for you! I like your nerve. She shall be ready to go Saturday."

The Clipper was soon repaired.

She was then stancher than ever.

The rest of the week was spent by Frank and his two friends at quipping her for her long voyage.

It had been the inventor's intention to make an exploring trip in her for mere pleasure, but now that they had an object in view it lent spice to the cruise.

Frank realized that their information about the location of the unken diamond mine was very meagre, for the sailor had no bearing of the place beyond a mere view of a far distant volcanic mountain.

By this time the eruption might be over, and a long and tedious search for the place would be necessary.

When Saturday came the sea engine was ready to depart.

Our friends took leave of every one on shore, and boarding the Clipper the inventor entered the turret, pulled a lever over that put the battery current into the machinery and she started.

The four paddle wheels in conjunction with the screw lent the boat great rate of speed.

Going through the canal into the river, she followed that water course to the Atlantic, and finally ran into the ocean.

Frank shaped her course for the southeast.

Her oval back made her look like an enormous turtle, and yet upon a close inspection her general outline was that of an engine resembling a locomotive running over the sea.

So odd was this appearance, in fact, that it amazed people on passing ships, who caught a glimpse of her in passing.

Her machinery worked like a clock.

Fair weather favored her on her long cruise toward the Cape of Good Hope, and the advantage of the huge blade at her bow was made manifest in crossing the Sargasso.

It cut through the kelp like a razor, opening a passage for the sea engine through the dense drifting weed, whereas with ordinary vessels, the stem caught it, retarding their progress.

Upon reaching the Cape of Good Hope, the waters assumed an extraordinary aspect never seen anywhere else.

At the period of high tide in the offing, the waves were the highest in any part of the ocean, under the influence of a strong northwest wind, which traversed the south Atlantic pressing the waters toward the Cape.

The billows lifted themselves in long ridges with deep hollows between them, running high and fast, tossing their white caps aloft, and resembled the green hills of a rolling prairie.

Their march was stately and their roll majestic.

They attained the appalling height of forty feet.

Upon doubling the stormy cape, ships find themselves followed for weeks at a time by these rolling swells furiously driven and lashed to foam by the west wind.

The sea-engine was rolled and tossed like a cork in these immense billows, and Frank turned to Hunt and said:

"I am going to double the cape under water."

"Just as well to do so, sir," the sailor replied. "See there!"

He pointed at the sky where banks of dark, threatening clouds were piling up in heavy masses.

It was a violent storm gathering, to get caught in which in that region was almost fatal.

"That clinches the matter!" said Frank.

"Won't it be just as rough down below?"

"No; although the motion of a wave is felt three hundred and fifty times its height, down in the profound depths. Yet, the further down you go, the more diminished the strength of the motion becomes."

"Then as these waves are forty feet high, their motion must be felt to a depth of 24,000 feet."

"Exactly. That's over two miles and a half."

As Frank spoke, he opened the sea valves.

The Clipper began to sink.

He let her go down to a depth of three hundred feet and then shut the valves, when she ran ahead under water.

There was an unknown depth below the boat.

The electric lights blazed out, lighting up the submarine scene, and displayed a variety of fishes around the Clipper.

She scarcely felt the waves here, and her water ballast caused her to ride as steadily as a rock.

Nor was her speed diminished.

She had a full supply of air in her reservoirs, and as soon as the injectors began to operate our friends felt no more inconvenience than would have been experienced on the surface.

"Don't the air get hot from being strongly compressed?" asked Hunt.

"Yes, it would, and would injure us," Frank replied. "But by a simple arrangement I have it traverse two layers of water before it reaches us, and that cools it. By the time it is used up by breathing we have a fresh supply of air from the reservoirs."

"How deep can an ordinary diver go down?"

"Less than two hundred feet. Every thirty-two feet down he finds an additional pressure of fifteen pounds to the square inch upon him. As an ordinary sized man presents about 6,000 square inches, you may imagine what an enormous weight he has to sustain."

"This boat must be under a tremendous pressure, then."

"That's why I built her so strong."

"Why do you only use electric lights?"

"Simply because other lights have to consume air to burn down here. If air is fed to them, the wicks carbonize soon, and the light gets feeble and goes out. Our brass search-lights are water-tight, and inclose regulators of a system of my own. The wires which conduct the current enter the lamps by traversing a non-conducting plug of tow. The current comes from a pile of fifty elements, and a dazzling light, equivalent to 2,000 Carcel jets for each lamp is thus obtained."

Hunt turned toward the window and peered out.

A cry of alarm escaped him as he did so, and he shouted:

"Port your helm—quick!"

"What for?" demanded Frank, without complying.

"There's an enormous whale rushing at us!"

Frank merely smiled, and as he peered out, he put every volt of electro motive force in the wheels that the batteries generated.

The Clipper rushed ahead furiously.

Fifty yards ahead there was a whale fully eighty feet in length, and this gigantic monster was rushing toward the Clipper.

It was very evident that it was a savage dispositioned beast, else it would never have attempted to attack the boat.

On it came, and around it swept to deal the sea engine a blow with its tail, designed to smash the boat.

The force of such a blow might have demolished the boat.

Frank realized what its intention was.

He kept his glance upon it keenly, and operated the wheel with amazing skill, for he knew very well that all depended upon him to save the sea engine from ruin.

CHAPTER V.

LIBERATING THE SLAVES.

THERE sounded a tremendous thump as the sea engine came in contact with the whale's body.

The shock knocked Oscar Hunt down, but Frank retained his perpendicular by clutching the wheel.

"We're gone!" gasped the startled sailor.

"Not yet!" replied Frank, in grim tones.

He had his glance fixed upon the whale against which the sea engine had run with terrific force.

And he saw the huge blade cut through the animal's body like a cleaver, severing it in two.

Instantly the sea was dyed crimson with the creature's blood, and while the tail and a large portion of that slenderest part of its body went one way, the remainder went the other.

Both sank out of sight and the Clipper continued on.

It was a terrible cut, for the sea engine had been plunging toward the whale, while that part of it which had been severed was sweeping around toward the boat, increasing the force of contact.

Hunt scrambled to his feet and wildly peered out.

"Where's the whale?" he asked, in amazement.

"Cut in two," replied Frank, with a laugh.

"Is that so? By thunder, I thought it was the Clipper that was injured. You must have steered her with consummate skill."

"Oh, I had to keep my wits about me," replied Frank.

At the time of the shock Barney had been in the kitchen playing a fiddle, while Pomp was cooking the supper.

Both were sent flying on the floor.

Recovering their feet they rushed into the turret.

"Howly floy! Is it garn we is?" gasped the Irishman.

"Ise a dead niggah!" roared the coon. "Le' me git out ob heah!"

Seeing Frank and the sailor laughing at them their alarm instantly subsided, and Barney assumed a sickly grin, pointed at the coon and said:

"Ha, ha! D'yez moind ther nagur! He's that scared, bedad, he has turned pale. I wuz only foolin' him!"

"G'way dar, f'ish! Yo's mo'skeerd dan dis yere chile am," Pomp retorted. "Ef yo' am'n't, wha' fo' yo' grab me by de coat-tails an' yell fo' me ter sabe yer in de kitching—h'm?"

"Faith, it wor a convulsion yez had entoirely ontill I dhriv me toe agin ther tail av yer coat ter bring yez to."

How long they might have gone on lying about each other in this manner is uncertain, but Frank interrupted them with:

"That will do, boys. The danger is over. A whale was foolish enough to get in our way. You can attend its funeral if you wish."

"Begorry, I thought a mountain fell on us," said Barney.

"Spec's dey am no damage done, Marse Frank?"

"Only to the whale, Pomp."

"Git back in yer cage then, ye moon-faced gorilla!"

"De suppah am ready," said Pomp. "If yo' gemmen will step into de kitching I done serb yo'."

"Faix, I'm ready," said Barney.

"I say de gemmen," replied Pomp. "Dat didn' lude ter yo'."

"Howly jim-jams! d'yer mean ter call me a loafer?"

"Don' need ter, honey. Yo' face gibbs you away," chuckled the coon.

Then he dodged.

If he hadn't Barney's fist would have lifted him under the ear.

As the darky's head got out of the way Barney's knuckles landed on the metal wall with a thud that made the bones crack.

He gave a howl of agony and raced after Pomp.

A riot was averted by the timely arrival of Frank, as Hunt had taken charge of the wheel, and the supper proceeded in peace between the Irishman and the coon.

The rily look of the water soon gave Frank to understand that the storm had broken overhead.

But they did not feel its effects down in the solemn solitude of the ocean's depths.

On the following morning they rounded the cape, and all hands were aroused by hearing Hunt shout:

"Reade! Reade! Get up!"

"What's the matter?" asked Frank, looking out of his bunk.

"We are close upon land!" replied the sailor.

"Where is it?"

"On the port side."

"It must be the African coast. Veer off."

"But there's land on the starboard quarter, too."

"That's queer! Where can we be? Raise the Clipper!"

The sailor started the pump going, and the sea engine rose to the top.

She was then off Cape St. Francis, off which there was a bar, and had run between this bar and the cape.

Frank realized at a glance what happened.

The storm had vanished, and the sun was brightly shining, there

was a heavy roll on the sea, and the thermometer showed a high temperature to the water although the air was cold.

Frank quickly comprehended the cause of it.

The boat was in the great gulches current which runs down the east coast of Africa, around the cape, across the Atlantic, up to the Gulf of Mexico, and there forms the Gulf Stream.

He explained to Hunt the cause of the land on each quarter, and peering out the window, caught sight of a sail ahead.

It was a large Arabian dhow, with a long beak, and a very large stern, and was heading up for the coast.

"Do you see that craft?" asked Frank.

"Queer looking vessel! What is she?"

"A slaver, I'm sure."

"Can it be possible?"

"You'll soon see. Send the boat under until she is all sunk but the turret, and we'll watch that fellow."

Hunt carried out this plan.

The entire hull was submerged, but the turret remained above water, and they sped toward the dhow.

The Arabian vessel now ran into a small cove, and as the Clipper reached a point abreast of it, Frank saw several canoes leave the shore, filled with negroes.

"See there!" he exclaimed. "Most of them are bound!"

"They are slaves," admitted Hunt, in surprise.

"Those fellows will probably carry them to Arabia, if——"

"If what?"

"I don't prevent them."

"Can you?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"All arm yourselves."

"Well, what next?"

"I'll run the sea engine into that cove."

Barney and Pomp turned out and joined Hunt.

There were a number of air guns on board, the bullets of which consisted of dynamite, encased in steel shells.

They operated like torpedoes.

Up to the cove dashed the Clipper.

Frank flung open the window to give his friends a chance to fire, and glanced at the canoes which now were near the dhow.

There were four of them, each containing a dozen men, of whom eight in each boat were bound prisoners.

"Pick out the paddlers, boys!" said Frank.

"All ready."

"Then fire!"

Whiz! went the bullets.

An awful report followed their bursting.

Fierce yells came from the boatmen.

They involuntarily paused, and Frank cried:

"You've demoralized them—give them another shot!"

Again the weapons were discharged, and several of the black paddlers shrieked and toppled over.

"Once more!" cried Frank.

Bang, bang, bang!

Nearly all the paddlers were wounded now, so there was not much chance of the canoes getting back to land.

As no reports emanated from the weapons, the crews of the dhow and canoes could not locate the place they came from.

Forging ahead, the Clipper ran between the ship and canoes.

As soon as the negro paddlers saw her, every one sprang overboard and struck out for the shore.

The fettered slaves were greatly terrified by the sea engine, and set up a mournful chorus of howls.

"Barney—Pomp—Hunt! Liberate them!" cried Frank.

The three rushed back to the exit chamber armed with knives, and Frank brought the engine to the surface.

Out on deck went the three.

The boat dashed up to the canoes.

In a moment more several of the blacks were released, and knives were put into their hands to free their companions.

As soon as they understood the good intentions of our friends, they shouted with glee and showed by every tone and action how grateful they were.

In a remarkably short space of time all hands were free of their bonds and in possession of the paddles.

They then stood a fair chance to escape.

Just then, however, the excited Arabs on the dhow had seen what was transpiring, and set up a shout.

There were guns aboard the boat.

Frank soon discovered this startling fact for one of the weapons vented a thunderous roar, and a shot came howling across the water.

It was badly aimed, for it passed over the Clipper and dropped in the water on the other side of her.

"They are showing their fangs!" said Frank.

Then he shouted to his friends to come in.

They hastily complied.

As soon as they were inside Frank opened the water valves.

The Clipper at once began to sink, and soon vanished from the view of the crew of the dhow.

CHAPTER VI.

GRAVE DOUBTS.

ONCE the sea engine was buried under the water, her crew felt safe from the guns on the dhow.

That shot gave them plainly to understand that the Arabs were furious over having lost the slaves they had been intent upon taking from the canoes, and as there was yet some chance of them capturing the negroes, Frank said:

"I'm going to put an end to their trade in human flesh!"

"Faith I'm wid yer ter killin' ivery wan av thim!" said Barney.

"No, I do not mean to massacre these people."

"Den wha' yo' gwine ter do Marse Frank?" asked Pomp.

"Destroy their craft."

"We have no means of doing it," said Hunt.

"Oh, yes we have," answered Frank quietly. "I'll show you."

He had brought the Clipper to a pause at a depth of ten feet from the surface, and now started her toward the dhow.

In a few moments they saw the hull of the Arabian ship floating in the sea above them.

Frank then left the wheel in Pomp's hands.

Giving the coon some instructions he went back in the store-room, and put on a peculiar-looking diving-suit made of thick rubber with a steel helmet and a knapsack on the back.

This knapsack was filled with compressed air enough to last him for the space of five hours.

It was injected into the helmet by an automatic mechanism, and the consumed air escaped by a valve.

In the breast of the suit was set an electric lamp, which derived its current from a small but powerful battery inclosed in a receptacle secured to his belt.

As soon as Frank was so attired he opened an ammunition box which contained a number of bombshells, in which a clockwork was arranged to explode them at any specified time.

To the outside of these shells a sharp spike was screwed.

Having taken one of the dangerous explosives out, Frank entered the exit room, filled it with brine, and went up on deck.

Pomp had been holding the sea engine beneath the dhow and when he saw Frank appear on deck he raised her.

Frank set the clock work going in the bomb by pressing a small projecting wire-end, and stuck the spike in the ship's bottom near the stern.

He then motioned Pomp to steer the Clipper away.

The darky obeyed.

The bomb adhered to the dhow by the spike.

He had set it to burst in five minutes.

Away glided the submarine vessel half a mile.

She then ascended to the surface in the sun-light.

The Arabs in the dhow were chasing the canoes up the coast and were rapidly gaining on the escaped slaves, for they dared not land as their enemies were lurking on the shore.

Before the slavers reached them the bomb burst.

There was a fearful roar, and a shower of timbers flew up in the air.

All the stern of the dhow was blown off, and a wild yell pealed from her dusky crew, many of whom were injured.

Then the vessel began to fill and sink.

As she was going down her crew leaped overboard and struck out for the shore.

Now, however, the slaves turned on them.

The blacks had the Arabs at their mercy.

Knowing it well, and with all their hatred aroused against their enemies, they paddled up to them and began to kill them.

Upon seeing this terrible massacre going on, Frank hastily took off his diving suit and dashed down in the boat.

"Pomp," he shouted, "stop them!"

"Yassah!" came the reply.

The coon steered the Clipper toward them.

Getting off his diving dress Frank rushed up to the turret.

Before they got anywhere near the black men they had dispatched the last of the slavers.

A tremendous and savage shout of triumph escaped them, for they imagined they had won a legitimate victory to be proud of.

"Frightful!" commented Frank with a shudder.

"Shall we paste ther spalpeens?" asked Barney.

"No; they know no better."

"Specs dey fink dey done somefin' great."

"They haven't left one of the Arabs alive," said Hunt.

"Wha' yo' gwine ter do now?" asked Pomp.

"Head for India."

The coon complied, and the Clipper glided away from the scene, ran along to the southward of Madagascar, and headed for the island of Ceylon.

Several days afterward she was going up the eastern coast of India, and a sharp lookout was maintained for the peculiar mountain which Hunt declared marked the place where the sunken island was to be found.

One afternoon Frank asked the sailor in the kitchen:

"Was that island directly opposite the mountain?"

"Exactly," answered Hunt, with a nod.

"Now, you think it must have been near Lake Chilka?"

"It must have laid to the south of it."

"Have you any good reason for believing so?"

"Yes, for the storm came from the northwest. That would have blown the Ida C. Ray to the south by east."

"About what distance?"

"It did not seem to be more than fifty miles."

"In that case we must be near the place now."

"You can rest assured of that."

"And it lay, you estimate, twenty miles from shore?"

"That's as near as I could judge."

"What was the dimensions of the island?"

"Almost round in shape, about half a mile in diameter. It stood no more than ten feet above the sea, and in rough weather must have been washed by the waves."

Frank nodded.

Then he entered the wheel-room.

"Well, Barney, any luck yet?" he asked.

"It's out av me head me eyes is boolgin', luckin' fer mountains wid crosses atop av thim, but be Heavens I'll go cock-eyed afore I'll see wân, I'm afeard, Masther Frank."

The Clipper was then no more than a league from land, and they could plainly see the jungles and tropical verdure that profusely lined the Indian shores.

Not a mountain of the kind they hunted for could be seen.

"You seem to be doubtful about it," said Frank.

"Faith who knows! Remember, this sailor wor a shtranger to us. It's great faith yez must have had in ther mug av him to attempt a thrip av this koind widout knowin' whether he wor givin' yez a shstraight tip or a big loy, d'yer moind."

"Barney, I am an unerring reader of character. Once I size up a man I never make a mistake. I trust Oscar Hunt, and until it is proven to me that he has led us on a wild goose chase, I will still believe the story he told me about the sunken diamond mine."

"Shure, I'll howld me tongue after that," said Barney, scratching his head and pulling a look of perplexity. "But fer my part, me jewel, divil a bit will I belave his yarn until some wan shows me ther loikes av his diamond moine forninst me oyes."

"That's where we disagree then," laughed Frank, shrugging his shoulders, and he went back into the engine room.

There he found Pomp oiling the machinery.

The coon was whistling a lively tune as he worked, and glanced up at Frank with a grin that showed all his ivories.

"Reckon yo' ain't seen nuffin' ob dat yar mounting yit, sah, hab yo?" he asked, as he paused.

"Here's another doubter!" exclaimed Frank. "Have you and Barney been putting your heads together to plan a means of discouraging me?"

"Lawd amassy no!" assented Pomp. "Me an' dat white trash Bahney doan' speak now. I done put salt in he coffee fo' suppah las' night instid ob sugar, an' he say I done it apurpose."

"Then, how is it you are both of the same opinion?"

"Dunno, honey, but I specs it's kase dar amn't no sign ob de mounting or nuffin else yit."

Frank was not convinced by this reasoning.

He firmly set his mind against all doubts, for his confidence in Oscar Hunt had grown with their acquaintance, rather than diminished, despite their lack of success thus far.

He resolved to keep the boat going up the coast until he found some sign of the landmark.

"A mountain can't vanish in a night," he muttered.

Consequently the sea engine continued on, and they met with no better success than before as time went by.

Indeed, one morning they arrived in view of the mouths of the Ganges, and were hailed by an outgoing English ship.

"Bound for Calcutta?" asked her captain, after the first salutation.

"No. Are we near there?" asked Frank, in surprise.

"Within a few hours of the city."

"Is it possible?"

The ship went on, and Frank turned to Oscar Hunt.

The sailor looked very pale and troubled.

"How do you account for this?" Frank asked him.

"We must have passed the landmark two days ago, Mr. Reade."

"Do you feel sure of it?"

"Positive. See here, Mr. Reade! I know that doubts and suspicions have crept into the minds of yourself and your friends, nor can I blame you for them. But I swear to you, as I hope for salvation hereafter, that I have not deceived you—that I have told you the truth. Will you believe me?"

There was such a truthful ring in his tones that Frank was deeply impressed with his sincerity.

He grasped the sailor's hand.

"Yes, I believe you, Oscar Hunt. You are an honest man. For some reason we have missed finding the place. Now I am going to hunt for the sunken diamond mine until I find it," he exclaimed. "Brace up, old fellow, and be of good cheer."

CHAPTER VII.

A ROYAL TIGER.

On the following day as the Clipper was running down the coast to the southward again the Jeypore Hills were sighted standing back from the coast.

Frank had been studying an atlas of that section of the country and going into the wheel-room where Oscar Hunt stood steering the sea engine he pointed to the shore and said:

"That range of mountains is the only one lying between Chilka and the mouths of the Godaveri river. Consequently I have concluded that the cross shaped mountain you saw must be one of that range."

"What is the length of the range?" asked the sailor.

"About three hundred and fifty miles."

"Then our hunt lies within that boundary."

"Half that distance will do. You said the Ida C. Ray first struck a

rock off Lake Chilka. Then she drifted southward for several hours when she struck on the diamond island. How many hours later did this occur?"

"Not more than five."

"Had your ship any sails up?"

"The torn fragments of a few."

"We will then suppose she drifted at the rate of ten or twelve knots an hour. Taking the extreme rate she would therefore have been between fifty and sixty miles south of Lake Chilka. We will proceed to that point now. There we will try to find some evidence of the volcanic mountain. The location must be somewhere between Baruva and Naupada—two coast towns. At that point a spur of the Jeypore Hills runs toward the coast. Could it be this spur that was the volcanic mountain?"

"I am ignorant of the geography of this country."

"How long ago was it that you were wrecked here?"

"Seven months ago to-day."

"In that interval a volcanic mountain could have sunk down into the earth. There are instances of such mountains thus vanishing in Mexico. Anyhow we have a clue to work on now."

"I hope we shall succeed, as I want to clear myself of the cloud of suspicion with which Barney and Pomp regard me," earnestly said the sailor.

The Clipper passed the Chilka, and in the afternoon reached a point fifty miles south of the lake.

Here Barney stopped her.

The spur of the mountains Frank spoke of was seen.

It was decided to run in toward the shore between Pundi and Baruva.

Here the ghauts (landing stairs), rose in magnificent precipices, and headlands out of the ocean in some places from 1,500 feet to 8,000, here and there receding, and leaving broad level tracts between their base and the coast.

Some of these tracts were covered by dense jungles, interspersed with palms, sandal wood, and scrubby forests of rubber yielding and other trees, thickly covered with great creeping vines.

These plateaux, woods, rocks and plains abounded with wild animals, ranging from lions to tigers, birds of various kinds, and reptiles such as cobra di capello, and gavials of enormous size.

When the sea engine arrived close to the coast, she turned to the southward, and headed for a stream running through the jungle.

"We may get up this creek a distance, and then land to examine those hills," said Frank.

"Bedad it lucks as if there wor plenty wather," said Barney.

"Then turn her into the creek, and I'll go out on deck with a telescope and examine the elevations."

Frank left the turret as he spoke.

By the time he reached the deck, the boat was in the stream.

It was a broad deep creek at its mouth, but rapidly became narrower, the shores being overhung by the dense thorny jungle that bordered it on each side.

The sea engine ran along several hundred yards, and Frank leveled his glass at the mountain.

It did not look anything like the sort of a place described by Oscar Hunt, as its crest was covered with trees and shrubbery.

While Frank was busy examining it, the boat suddenly came to a pause with such a shock as to almost fling him overboard, and the water was all riled up with mud.

"Heavens! What's that?" he muttered, in alarm.

"We've struck a shoal!" cried Barney.

"The stream is too shallow to go up any further," said Frank.

"It is that, an' what's more, we're shtuck in the mud."

"Reverse your wheels!" exclaimed the inventor.

Barney obeyed, but the boat did not budge, for her big blade at the bow had plunged deeply into the mud and held her there.

Frank considered the situation awhile and then asked:

"Can you pump any ballast out of her, Barney?"

"Shure there isn't a dhrop av wather in the resevy."

"Then we will have to wait for the tide to rise and lift us."

"Do it coom up here?"

"Yes—it must. It is rising now."

"Arrah, it's a pickel we're in, entoirely."

"In one hour it will float us, I believe."

"Bad cess to me igrerence! Why didn't I know it wuz shoal here?"

"I don't see how you could!" laughed Frank.

He was just upon the point of going inside, when a sudden rustling among the jungle on the right hand side attracted his attention, and he gazed toward the spot.

To his amazement he saw the bushes part and a big head appear.

It was an enormous head, with a fiery mouth and glaring eyes.

"The head of a tiger!" muttered Frank, staring at it intently.

In a moment more the monster took a step forward, when the fore part of its body appeared, which was instantly followed by the rest of the animal.

It was a terrible but magnificent beast, twelve feet in length, four feet high, a bright tawny color, beautifully marked with dark transverse bands, passing into pure white on the under parts.

Frank stood twenty feet away from the brute, but seeing it crouch to spring at him, and knowing that it could cover the distance separating them, he started for the trap-door.

He had not taken one step before the animal launched itself in the air with the utmost grace and agility, and landed on the deck between him and the trap.

His retreat was thus cut off.

The boat shook from the fall of that heavy body upon it.

Frank had a bowie knife in his belt, but it was a wretched weapon with which to defend his life, and he shouted as he drew it.

"Barney! A tiger! Quick! help me!"

The Irishman heard him and looked out the window.

It took his breath away to see what a monster the young inventor was facing, and he rushed from the turret.

Frank now kept a steady glance fastened upon the tiger's lurid orbs and heard the animal utter a low, hoarse growl as it turned its body around.

Then it made a sudden rush for him.

Quick as a flash Frank vaulted over the railing and the tiger rushed by where he had been standing, just grazing his leg.

It instantly swung around and darted at him again.

The mighty paw was darted forward and dealt him a blow which he tried to dodge, but the great claws caught in his clothes and ripped them as a knife would have done.

The impetus given its body by the last rush sent the mighty beast down on the slope of the oval deck.

Frank launched himself against it.

The animal was so near the edge that the hind quarters went over in the water, but its fore claws got a desperate clutch on the edge of the deck and clung there with a scratching sound.

It thus held its head and fore-quarter up, while the rest of its body was buried in the water.

Its hind claws were digging furiously at the under part of the sea engine in an effort to drag itself up from the water.

Up to the animal rushed Frank.

He raised his bowie knife and stabbed the tiger in the neck.

A horrible yell escaped it.

Then it renewed its struggles.

It strove to fasten its fangs into the young inventor, but he took care to keep out of reach of its red mouth.

Again and again he plunged the knife into the neck of the beast, every stab wringing a terrible yell from its throat.

So frenzied became the brute from the repeated stabs, that it exerted every muscle in its quivering body, and by a supreme effort it hauled itself up on the deck again.

Frank now recoiled inside the railing.

He saw that the beast was maddened beyond measure.

A bloody froth flecked its mouth, its eye-balls protruded and glared like coals of fire, the hair bristled all over its body, and its tail lashed its flanks, while its short ears laid back.

The tiger did not pause a moment when it got out of the water, for it knew that Frank was responsible for its agony.

With one furious bound it flew through the air.

Then it struck him a terrible blow.

Down on his back he was knocked with the tiger on top of him, and the knife fell from his hand.

A shiver of horror convulsed him.

He was entirely disarmed now.

The savage brute was thirsting for his life, and was in such a fury that it was bound to tear him to pieces unless he managed by some good luck to escape it.

A howl, prolonged and dreadful to hear escaped the animal when it found the young man at its mercy.

Having glanced from side to side, it next bent its fiery eyes upon him, a wrinkle furrowing its forehead, its ears laying back further upon its neck, and its jaws gaping so wide as to bear its formidable teeth.

"Help!" shouted Frank, wildly.

He dared not move as it would hasten his death.

Even the cry he uttered brought a snarl from the tiger, and caused it to bend nearer its victim.

Frank cast an anxious glance around.

Not a soul was in sight.

He gave up all hope then.

CHAPTER VIII.

A JOURNEY UNDER THE SEA.

BARNEY had rushed into the store-room and picking up a rifle made a dash for the trap, but when he reached the stairs he discovered that the weapon was not loaded.

A cry of vexation escaped him.

Back to the store-room he dashed again for ammunition.

He lost considerable time, and it made him nervous about Frank's safety, for he could hear the struggle going on above distinctly.

Rapidly loading the air-rifle, Barney started for the deck again.

Just as he got his head through the trap, he saw Frank lying prostrate with the tiger astride of his body.

"Howly poker!" gasped the Celt.

Then he aimed and fired at the animal.

Deep into its body plunged the bullet.

Then it exploded.

A piece of flesh as big as Barney's fist was blown out of its body.

With an agonized scream the wounded beast flew up in the air and came down on top of the pilot-house.

Again Barney fired.

The second shot lodged in the brute's head.

It went down like a stone.

Several kicks ensued, then all was over.

The shot killed it.

Frank arose.

He was covered with blood from the animal's wounds, he was breathing hard from excitement, and his face was pale and sweaty.

"I had almost given you up, Barney," said he.

"Bedad I'm not ter be shook so aisy," laughed the Irishman.

"I see you've settled the monster."

"More power to me fisht, I did."

"See if we can't secure its hide."

"I'm a butcher at shkinning thim beasts. Watch me."

And Barney picked up Frank's knife and set to work on the animal with the greatest dexterity.

Pomp and the sailor now came on deck.

They required no explanation of what happened, for the scene explained itself in very plain terms.

By the time Barney had secured the tiger's skin, Frank had washed himself and changed his clothes, and the tide had the boat raised.

The inventor thereupon entered the turret and reversed the wheels, when the boat pulled her blade from the mud and she rode free.

"Yo' gwine any furdur up der crick?" asked Pomp.

"No; we might get stuck again," Frank answered.

"Wha' yo' fine out about de mounting, sah?"

"Absolutely nothing. It has no semblance of a cross on top."

"Golly, wha' we do about it den?"

"As there is no other course left open, I intend to sink the boat and cruise about here under water on a hunt for the sunken diamond mine," replied Frank, thoughtfully.

"Spec's dat am de bes' plan, sah."

Frank glanced at the registers.

The batteries needed recharging and the air chambers refilling.

He therefore went back into the engine room, and having put the air pump in motion, he next connected the dynamo with the accumulator jars and started the oil engine operating it.

Several hours passed by ere everything was ready.

The shadows of twilight began to fall when the sea engine left the creek and glided out to sea.

Frank glanced at the patent log.

It stood at 5,400.

He therefore drove the engine out to sea till it registered 5,420.

She was then twenty miles from land, and as everything was in readiness, he opened the water valves and sunk her.

Down she went to the depth of fifty feet ere he stopped her and put the wheels in motion to send her ahead.

Starting the search-light, he began to work her in a zig-zag way, and posted Oscar Hunt on lookout at the window.

"Is there any particular distinguishing feature about the sunken island?" he asked the sailor.

"You would readily recognize the place by numerous projecting slabs of sandstone ten feet in height, scattered all over the island," replied the sailor. "They lend it a very peculiar appearance."

"Do you think the island descended to the level of the bed of the sea?"

"No. It cannot be possible, for when it went down I distinctly saw it below the top. The depth near that spot I have seen by the charts is over 200 feet. Consequently the island must yet rise from the bottom like a flat-top, cone-shaped hill."

"With such features we ought to find it easily."

"I'm afraid not. It seems to me like hunting for a needle in a haystack, to look for any particular object in the ocean, more especially as the landmark has disappeared."

"It is said by scientists that an abnormal disturbance of the earth's crust on land, is echoed by an earthquake or similar phenomena at sea. Now, if there was any affinity between the volcano you saw in eruption, and the earthquake that sunk the island, this theory seems to be carried out. With the burial of the island in the sea, perhaps the volcano subsided."

"That might account for the queer way it vanished," concurred Oscar Hunt. "It once stood on the main—what appeared to me to be a lofty elevation, with fire and smoke emanating from the crater at the top. What a pity it was I had no instruments to take the exact bearings of the island! We could then have gone directly to the spot and had no further trouble."

"Regrets are useless," said Frank. "We must hunt for it. If I spend a year looking for the sunken isle, I shall find it!"

He was determined on this point.

Especially so as Barney and Pomp scoffed his faith in the veracity of the sailor who told the story.

Frank wanted to prove to them that they were wrong.

The scene about the outside of the boat was very singular, for the search-light displayed it for a great distance around.

From the bottom rose the stalks of enormous jungles of eel grass, and the trunks of fantastic marine trees.

Winding in and out among this dark green vegetation were schools of dolphins, catfish and the susu of India.

Vast quantities of sea weed and other debris was floating in the submarine currents, and might have impeded the progress of the sea engine had not her big blade cut through them.

The water was alive with lobsters of enormous size, many of which fastened on the Clipper all over.

As the daylight waned the gloom of the sea deepened, and objects at a distance became indistinct.

Many of the finny inhabitants of the water dove down to lie down on the bottom or bury themselves in the mud for repose.

Then the night fish took their place.

Strangely made jelly fish floated along throwing out a white ghostly light, which gradually melted away in the gloom.

Then the moonfish appeared.

They were round, silvery objects that gleamed like electric lights through the dense element.

Darting around them like comets flashing in the sky were myriads of tiny fire flies of the sea.

They performed the most singular curves and vertical lines as they darted to and fro in the gloom, clusters of them standing silent like planets, and others flashing here and there like shooting stars in every conceivable direction.

Great black spider crabs, with demoniacal bodies, and the most diabolical protruding eyes, worked their way through the busy constellations of phosphorescent fish.

These ugly creatures had a singularly repulsive look among those beautiful luminous denizens of the deep.

They were surrounded by sparkling little fish that threw from their scales the most beautiful metallic colors of red, blue, green and yellow.

For awhile these fairy-like scenes would continue to play.

Then some monstrous fish would gradually emerge from the dark, shadowy distance, rush toward them like great cannibals, and gobble them up by the score as they scattered and frantically fled for their lives in all directions.

Frank lowered the boat one hundred feet deeper, and the bottom came in view in the strong glare of the search-lights.

Here the most grotesque forms of rock were seen rising from the bottom, crusted with thousands of barnacles, and swarming with myriads of prickly sea urchins lurking in the clefts.

Not only the rocks, but the bed of the sea was brilliant as a flower garden with exquisitely colored anemones.

These creatures were flowers in appearance of the brightest tints, and usually grew as flowers grow, yet in reality they were animals born in the form of flowers.

The ocean is full of them.

Great banks of delicately tinted red coral festooned the sandy tracts, growing in branchy shafts like trees, and gathered in dense masses by the polyps that made it, until it assumed the form of reefs which grew day by day.

Great banks of mud covered vast stretches of the undulating ground, which were succeeded by hills, plains, deep depressions and towering escarpments.

Down in one of these bowl-like hollows, the water was eddying around the wreck of a big ship which was half buried in the sand, and gradually falling to pieces.

Along the bottom crept the most fiendish looking animals of strange shapes that were never seen on the surface by any mortal man, and through the brine rose the most profuse vegetation of the most singular appearance.

Here and there forests of trees presented a barrier to the boat, but she ripped her way through them.

Then great rocks obstructed her way, and she went over them with the greatest of ease.

And thus, amid ever-changing scenes, the sea engine went on for several days in every direction hunting for the sunken diamond mine, her crew constantly upon the alert.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TWO SEA CANNIBALS.

"We are caught in an awful current, Mr. Reade."

"Can't you force the Clipper out of it, Hunt?"

"No! Didn't you hear that crash just now?"

"Has anything serious happened? You look pale and agitated."

"See the wheel. It swings loosely in my hand."

"By thunder, the rudder has been injured."

"That's just what I fear."

"Sink her to the bottom!"

The sailor opened the valves, and the Clipper went down into a wide, deep groove, cut by the current in the bed of the sea.

Here she paused and keeled over before the current.

It was then midday, and the blazing tropical sun was darting its luminous shafts through the brine.

A yellowish tinge was lent to the water.

The swift flowing submarine current into which the Clipper had drifted streaked the view so that everything was blurred and striated, distorted, and unnatural to the sight.

As the boat paused, every drifting weed and object that floated near enough to her caught against her hull and lodged there until it was not long before she was covered with debris.

"She struck a rock, you say?" asked Frank.

"Yes; I tried to avoid it, but the swift current hurled her against it with appalling force," replied Oscar Hunt.

"I must go out and repair the rudder. Until that is done we cannot hope to get out of the grasp of this current."

"Look out for yourself, Reade. The strength of the flow must be terrific to push this sea engine over so."

"Oh, I am accustomed to these currents."

"Let me go out and help you."

"All right; we will carry such tools as I deem necessary to save time and many trips in and out of the boat."

Telling Barney and Pomp about it, they proceeded to the store room and got such things as they needed.

Then they donned diving suits and left the Clipper.

Once out on deck they felt the force of the irresistible current in a most unexpected way.

It caught them and hurled them from the boat into the sea, and was swiftly bearing them away when they were carried to the bottom by their weights.

Here by dint of digging their hands and feet into the sand they managed to creep back to the sea engine.

It was toilsome work though.

The fierce current kept pressing against them with overwhelming force and pushing them back.

When they reached the boat Frank crept up on deck and got a rope, one end of which he secured to the Clipper.

The other end he tied around Hunt and himself.

By this means he prevented the current having a chance to carry them both away again as it had done.

They then got down under the stern.

There they found the rudder hanging by one hinge.

The heads of the bolts on the others had been torn off.

As Frank had brought the right kind of tools with him they set to work driving out the old bolts and putting in new.

This work required considerable time.

Indeed the darkness of night fell by the time it was done.

Putting the tools in the bag they were just about to go back aboard of the boat when it suddenly arose.

The current caught the Clipper and swept her away.

Fastened to her by the rope Frank and his companion were lifted from the ground at one moment, dragged over it the next and thus swiftly borne along.

She rose fifty feet from the bottom.

Then she turned to the right and began to force her way out of the current with all the strength of her wheels.

"Good heavens! Why didn't Barney wait until we got in the Clipper before starting her?" muttered Frank. "He must have thought we were aboard to have done this!"

He was tied to the extreme end of the rope, and seeing that he would have to do something, or run the chance of getting his brains dashed out against the rocks they met, he unfastened the rope.

Then he began to climb up.

Oscar Hunt was hanging above his head.

Clambering over him, Frank glanced back.

He received a tremendous shock of surprise as he did so.

Coming on in pursuit of them were two big sharks.

Now he understood why Barney had carried them away in this summary manner.

The Irishman must have seen the sharks coming, and realizing that they were likely to devour the two divers, he had very likely started the boat to drag them out of danger.

Instead of blaming him now, Frank blessed him.

The boat had a hard struggle to fight that awful current as she had to slant out of it.

But she was equal to it.

The sharks were caught in the current and could not very well get out of it, either, and it added materially to their naturally swift speed through the water.

Shooting ahead like cannon balls, they were within a few inches of the two divers when the Clipper flew from the current.

Turning over on their backs to seize Frank and Hunt, they might have snapped them in two had not the boat just then whisked them out of the current.

The sharks were swept along, deprived of their prey.

As the sea engine regained the clear water, a high wall of coral was seen ahead, and Barney stopped her.

He glanced back through a bull's-eye.

Just then the sharks left the current and he saw them, ripped out an ejaculation of horror and gasped:

"Be Heavens I haven't chaited thim out of me frinds yet, bad cess to thim! Faith, I'll dhrop ther Clipper! Hey, nagur, put on a doiv-suit, take a gun an' go help thim!"

As the sharks shot toward Frank and his companion, they both took a firmer grip on the short handled axes they carried.

Frank had to cling to the rope with one hand.

In a moment more the man eaters were close to them, and they raised their weapons and swung them down with all the strength they could muster.

The water resisted the blows in a measure but each of the cannibals received a dreadful gash.

It caused them to dart away.

Down sank the Clipper very rapidly.

She soon landed on bottom, and Hunt and Frank got away from the rope and started to get up on the sea engine.

Back came the sharks before they could do so, and they faced the voracious beasts again.

Just then Pomp appeared in the trap, clad in a diving suit and carrying an air gun in his hands.

The bull's-eye electric lanterns in the breast-plates of Frank and the sailor were flashed upon the big fishes.

That gave Pomp a clear view of them, and he aimed his weapon at them and fired two shots.

One of the sharks was killed.

The other had a piece blown out of its body.

Then a curious event occurred.

The one that was wounded, in the frenzy of pain it endured, made a rush for the sinking body of the other.

Seizing it in its jaws, the monster began to tear it to pieces.

Frank and his companion lost no time getting aboard the boat, and once inside, they took off their diving-suits.

"Pomp, you did nobly!" Frank exclaimed.

"Yassah! Yassah!" chuckled the diminutive coon. "De ole folks on de plantation whar I wuz raised say dis chile got noble blood, Marse Frank. It am bound fo' ter stick out, sah!"

"Very likely," laughed the inventor. "Did Barney raise us up from the bottom on the rope purposely?"

"Spec's he did, sah, caze he done see dem yere sharks a-comin', an' notice dat yo' an' Marse Hunt didn' see dem, so wif dat up go de sea engine an' away yo' done float."

"I admire his common sense. We're out of the current, too."

"Fo' sho' we am. Dat's kase yo' fix de ruddah."

Frank went up to the pilot house.

There he found Barney in a state of delight over their escape, and they spoke of nothing else for the next hour.

Having raised the boat, she was again sent on her hunt for the sunken island, and the night passed peacefully away.

On the following morning, after breakfast, Pomp went into the engine room to clean the machinery and lubricate the bearings.

The shaft operating the stern screw was revolved by a very wide, long leather belt standing at an angle, which ran over two big wheels with wide spaces between the top one and the ceiling, and the bottom one and the floor.

Having ungeared the belt by pushing a wooden lever, Pomp got a handful of cotton waste and got up on the belt to climb up to the wheel above to clean it and oil the bearings.

Just as he got half way up, lying flat on his stomach, Barney came in and saw the situation of the darky.

Seizing a piece of marline he rushed up to him, flung the cord over the coon's back, brought it under the belt, and tied him down.

"Hi dar! Wha' yo' doin'!" yelled the startled coon.

Barney did not reply.

Instead, he took the rest of the line and swiftly tied Pomp's ankles down to the belt.

If he had any more he would have secured his head.

Pomp made an attempt to get free.

Before he could do so, Barney uttered a roar of laughter and pulled the wooden lever, putting the belt in motion.

It began to revolve, carrying the howling coon with it, and in a moment more Pomp was flying up the incline and rushing down the other side at a terrific rate of speed.

CHAPTER X.

THE IDOL IN THE SEA.

"Hey, dar! Stop it! Fo' de lan' sakes, stop it!" yelled the coon.

"Go it, Pomp, ye devil!" howled Barney, frantically.

Swish—plunk! went the belt.

Over the top wheel it went, the coon doubling up.

Rattle-de-bang! sounded the belt.

Then down the under side shot Pomp, as if on a toboggan.

"Is'e a dead coon! Sen' fo' de undahtakah!" he howled, as his head came up on top of the flying belt again, followed by his body and legs, and up he flew on his mad career once more.

"Some wan bring me a museum!" roared Barney, fairly convulsed with laughter, over Pomp's flight. "I want ter show off ther floyin' nagur! Oh, waz iver mortal mon so tickled befores as I am?"

The coon disappeared over the top again with great rapidity.

Then Barney fairly howled with mirth.

It was a great joke to him.

Had he been in Pomp's place, his opinion might have changed.

Whiz—bang! went the darky again on his skyward journey.

The pressure of the strap on the wheel by this time had so crushed the marline that it parted.

Pomp shot through the air like a sky-rocket.

Unluckily for Barney he stood right in the flying coon's way.

He was bent over laughing till the tears ran from his eyes, and down came Pomp on his back.

The shock was terrific.

Barney was knocked forward on his stomach.

He slid along the floor, scraped the skin from his nose and shins, and brought up against the wall with his head.

The thump made him see stars.

"Murder!" howled he. "I've cracked me nut!"

He sat up with a groan, and rubbed his head, felt of his nose, and caressed his shins.

"Yah, yah, yah!" chuckled Pomp, forgetting his own rage and misery, and bursting out laughing. "Hooroar! Dat's de ticket! Oh, golly, what a lark! Do it again—do it again!"

"Bad manners to yez fer a monkey faced Boolgarian! D'yez moind dat I'm crippled fer loife?"

"Yo' will play tricks, hey?" chuckled Pomp. "Oh, Lawd amassy! Why doan' yo' git a new nose? Dat one am broke cl'ar in two, chile. Yo' see de ole rags on de flo'—h'm? Dem wuz yo' pants once."

"Give me a cleaver!" howled Barney, scrambling to his feet. "I want blood! Be heavens, I'll woipe ther sailin' wid yez!"

Considering it time to leave, Pomp rushed out.

The moment he was gone, Barney began to grin.

"Begorry," muttered he, "it's a crafty vilyun I am entoirely. If I hadn't dhrev him out in froight, he'd be after lavin' no hoide on me bones fer what I did ter him. Barney, ye owld rogue, it's a power av dissemblin' yez has entoirely."

And thus the matter was amicably adjusted.

On the following morning Frank was at the wheel guiding the boat

on her aimless course, when he suddenly caught sight of a scene ahead that gave him a start of surprise.

At first he imagined it was the sunken island.

A number of dim projections rose from the bottom which he at first imagined to be the sandstone slabs that Oscar Hunt had spoken about.

"All hands turn out!" he shouted.

It was about time for his companions to leave their berths but the sudden shout he uttered startled them.

They sprang from their berths crying:

"Wha' de mattah, Marse Frank?"

"Have you found the sunken diamond mine?"

"Faith we've roon on a rock!"

Frank pointed out the window and replied:

"Is that the place we are searching for?"

His companions rushed to the window, peered out and eagerly scanned the scene ahead.

Their hopes had all risen high in the expectation of seeing the sunken island!

Meanwhile the boat kept forging ahead, and Hunt shook his head finally, and said in disappointed tones:

"No! That isn't the place, Mr. Reade."

"Oh, pshaw!" cried Frank in disgust.

"Done knowed dot we wouldn' fine it!" growled Pomp.

"Bejabers it's a sunken city!" Barney cried in surprise.

This announcement amazed the others and their chagrin was forgotten in the excitement of the Irishman's announcement.

They eagerly scanned the scene outside, and soon saw that Barney had not made a mistake.

It was a submerged city.

And a very ancient one too.

The crumbled remains of a wall surrounded it.

Most of the stone buildings in the inclosure were down, but a few of them remained in a fair state of preservation, considering the long time the place was submerged.

They were strange looking houses greatly resembling those that remain in the Holy Land at the present day to show the people of modern times what sort of dwellings the ancients dwelt in centuries ago.

These buildings were half buried in the sand, all traces of many of them were washed away, and only a few broken walls of many others marked the places where they stood.

Regarding them attentively for some time, Frank said:

"This city is very very old. The style of architecture shows that plainly. So does the wall around it."

"But how it git heah under de ocean, Marse Frank?"

"That's very easily accounted for. Do you observe that it stands on a ridge running out to sea from the direction of the mainland? Well, it was evidently built on a cape or promontory. Some convulsion of nature sunk that strip of land, carrying down the city with it."

"Faix, that's quar entiorely," said Barney, dryly, "an' it do be soundin' loike ther yarn Mистер Hunt gave us about his sunken island, so it do."

"Such phenomena occurs frequently," said Frank. "All over the world the sea is slowly but gradually encroaching on the land. It robs a shore in one place to build up another in another place. The coasts are continually undergoing changes everywhere. Many other cities have been swallowed up by the waves in various parts of the world."

"I never heard of that before," said Hunt, doubtfully.

"Let me quote an historical example. In the year 1446 one of the most disastrous irruptions of the sea on record occurred submerging more than two hundred cities of Friesland and Zealand. For a long time afterwards the points of church steeples and summits of towns could be seen standing above the water."

By this time the sea engine was among the houses.

Thousands of fishes had made their nests there.

They fled in alarm before the approach of the Clipper.

It looked strange to see them swimming through the streets and houses of what had once been a populous city.

In the middle of the city there was an enormous building, and as Frank flashed the search-light upon it, he caught sight through one of the big arched doorways of a huge statue.

It was a tremendous idol of Siva, the Hindoo god.

This idol was a remarkable piece of work.

It was made of some kind of stone.

It had five heads, each one having three eyes, and the middle one was in the center of each forehead.

The hair was clotted together and brought over the head to form a horn from the forehead, around the necks were garlands of human skulls, and in the hands a trident surmounted by another skull.

The body was carved to represent it being clothed in deer skin.

Most remarkable of all was a bright glitter coming from the big eye in the middle of the forehead of the central head.

As Frank leveled a glass at it, he was amazed to see that the gleam came from an enormous sapphire.

It was a magnificent gem and must have weighed half a pound.

"By jingo!" he cried, "look at that stone in the forehead."

"A sapphire!" exclaimed Hunt, in amazement.

"Faix, it's a foortune!"

"Le's get it!" said Pomp, eagerly.

"Just what I had in view!" said Frank.

"It's magnificent!" said the sailor.

Frank stopped the boat outside the building.

There he let her rest on the bottom and telling Barney and Pomp to go with him, they left the turret.

Diving costumes were put on and tools were secured with which to dismount the stone from its setting.

They then left the boat.

Entering the temple, they glanced around and found themselves in a lofty room, the roof of which was supported by big columns and pillars in an advanced stage of decay.

Approaching the colossal statue, they climbed upon it and Frank made his way up to the middle head.

Here he planted himself and opened the tool bag he carried.

Taking out a cold chisel and a hammer, he set to work upon the stone that held the sapphire and chipped it off.

It was slow work as he had to be very careful not to injure the magnificent big precious stone.

Piece by piece the stone was broken away until the sapphire was loosened, and fell to the ground.

Barney picked it up.

As he did so they suddenly saw one of the big pillars fall.

It was followed by several more in rapid succession and Barney and Pomp had to dodge to avoid being hit by the falling pieces.

One of these great columns struck the idol and knocking it over sent Frank flying.

Then the roof began to fall.

Filled with alarm as they realized that the whole building was going to pieces Barney and Pomp rushed out.

Frank was left lying on the floor half stunned by his frightened friends.

CHAPTER XI.

A MONSTER OF THE DEEP.

FRANK quickly recovered his senses and staggered to his feet, when to his horror, he saw the big temple falling to pieces over his head.

Immense blocks of stone were crashing down from the roof, the massive walls were caving in, and all the big pillars were falling.

It was a frightful position to be placed in, for he did not know at what moment one of those mighty missiles might fall on him.

Frank glanced around.

His gaze rested upon a trap-door in the base of the idol.

It was a square piece of stone, with a handle of the same substance.

Frank grasped it, pulled the stone up, and exposed to view a dark aperture containing a flight of stairs.

In he jumped and down he went.

Scarcely had he arrived at the bottom when an enormous block of stone came down over the opening with a loud crash.

It was splintered and cracked, but it covered the opening so the young inventor could not get out again.

A chill of dismay passed over him when he saw it.

"No one saw me enter this place," he muttered. "Who would suspect its existence? No one. They therefore would not think of looking for me here. How will I ever get out again?"

These and other thoughts thronged his mind.

He glanced around to see where he was, when he felt a tremor in the ground beneath his feet.

"An earthquake shock!" he exclaimed. "So that's what caused the Hindoo temple to fall to pieces!"

The tremor passed and was not repeated.

Frank felt relieved.

He saw that he was in a corridor.

There was scarcely any sand and no rubbish in it.

Evidently the trap was almost water-tight and therefore kept the sea sand out; but the brine had forced its way in, and was as clear and sparkling as drinking water.

The corridor was neatly made of masonry, and he followed it a distance of fifty yards, when he reached a massive stone door.

Although it was once hung on metal hinges, they had been corroded long before, so that when he pushed against the door it fell outward, and gave Frank access to a small, stone compartment.

Ranged across the room were a number of pedestals, upon which stood long stone coffins, or sarcophagus.

Frank pulled the lid from one.

Within laid the skeleton of a man.

He had probably been one of the rulers of the place.

This crypt had evidently lain there undisturbed for centuries.

In the wall were several dark openings, and Frank penetrated them, one after another, only to find they were small ante-rooms filled with human skulls and bones that littered the floor.

The last one he entered had another door.

He pulled it over, and a mass of sand gushed in.

It clouded the water so that he could not see an inch ahead.

Patiently waiting until it settled, he caught sight of a flight of stone stairs in the opening.

"This way must connect with the sea," flashed across his mind.

"Otherwise that sand could not have got in here."

Mounting the stairs, he emerged into a large room without a roof, and having several doors and many windows.

It was a wing of the great temple.

Frank hastily left it.

Reaching the sand-covered street, he observed that the big temple laid a heap of ruins a short distance away.

The sea engine was gone.

She had come to a pause just outside the temple walls, but the spot was vacant now.

Frank's heart sunk.

"Could my friends have thought that I perished in the cave-in of the big building?" he thought. "If they did and have gone away never expecting to recover my body, I don't know what I shall do."

He strode toward the collapsed building.

Not only the temple but many other buildings had been shaken down by the earthquake.

Frank stood contemplating the wreck.

He wondered if Barney and Pomp escaped or were buried in the ruins and puzzled his mind over what had become of the Clipper.

She had, of course gone away to escape being demolished by the downpour of flying masonry.

As Frank eyed the ruin, he caught sight of an enormous crocodile-shaped beast come swimming along through the water by moving its tail and webbed feet.

A look of surprise mantled the inventor's face.

"How queer!" he exclaimed. "I never heard of crocodiles inhabiting the ocean, yet here's one and a monster too. What an odd looking one it is. I've never seen a monster like that before."

He watched the animal intently.

It was gliding along close to the ground, its enormous mouth wide open to admit the shrimps and small fish it lived on.

Although surprised at first, Frank soon got over it, for he had seen other marine animals and fishes down in the ocean's depths which never went near the top, and had never been seen before by the eyes of man.

This creature had such a dangerous appearance that he did not care to encounter it.

So he stepped behind a broken wall to get out of its sight, and remained there quietly for some time.

Finally he came to the conclusion that it must be gone, and cautiously peered around the edge of the wall.

As he did so he came face to face with the beast.

Its head was within an inch of his own.

Frank was startled.

The beast recoiled.

For a moment they glared at each other.

Then the crocodile darted toward Frank.

He sprang behind the wall again and lay flat against it.

This maneuver was useless, for the reptile came gliding around the corner of the wall again and caught sight of him.

Frank did not have a weapon with him, but his glance fell upon a torpedo fish lying on the ground and it gave him an idea.

"Why not make a human torpedo of myself," he cogitated.

No sooner thought of than done.

He unfastened the wires running from his battery to the breast lamp.

That of course extinguished the light.

He was left in gloom.

Drawing a small iron bar from his tool bag he joined the wires to it charging it with an electric current.

He could not see the marine saurian.

The rubber gloves he wore insulated his hands from the current.

He had no doubt that the crocodile saw him though, and as he could not hear or see its approach, he swept the electrified bar around before him, and it struck the animal.

It received a powerful shock.

There came a fierce commotion in the water.

Frank joined the wires to his lamp carbons again.

As the light flared out he saw the big beast in full retreat.

He then darted from behind the wall.

As he did so he was almost blinded by a broad glare of light, and saw that it came from the sea engine.

She was rushing toward him, for Pomp, at the wheel, had seen the glow of his breast lamp.

In a few moments she was close to him.

Frank clambered aboard.

As he reached the deck he saw the big saurian darting through the water toward him again.

Pomp saw the creature, too, and turning the Clipper around he sent her flying toward it.

The search-light dazzled the monster and it paused.

Before it could get out of the way the point of the big blade at the boat's bow struck it a fearful blow.

There came a violent shock, and the keen edge tore through the horrible scaly body, inflicting a fatal gash.

The animal fell beneath the sea engine, almost killed, and the boat passed on, while Frank went inside.

He took off his diving suit gladly enough, for the air in the knapsack was getting exhausted.

Barney and Oscar Hunt met him, and asked where he had been.

Frank explained, and then asked the Irishman:

"Why did you and Pomp desert me?"

"Shure, we thought yer wuz followin' us," the Celt replied. "We got aboard, an' motioned Hunt ter driv' her away, to escape ther blocks av rock floyin' troo ther wather all around her. Goir' insoide we missed yez, bu' seein' that ther temple had fallen ter pieces, bedad we suspishled yez wor kilt. Onyhow, off we wint ter foind ther corpse av ye. Sorra a wan did we discover. Then back we kem, an' seein' your loight, here we are."

"Have you got the sapphire?"

"I have an' here it is."

He handed the stone to Frank.

The inventor was amazed and delighted with the gem.

It measured two inches in diameter, was of the octahedron shape, had been cut in perfect facets and had a brilliant adamantine lustre.

The high refractive power was tremendous, and inside the stone was a small insect of a species not known on earth to-day, which had probably been thus trapped and preserved by the stone forming around it.

After Frank had admired the stone to his heart's content he went up forward to see what Pomp was doing.

The darky was grinning from ear to ear over their good fortune at finding Frank and the skillful manner in which he had destroyed the crocodile-like monster.

He had driven the sea engine away from the sunken city and she was then gliding over a broad, sandy plain.

"Ain't gwine ter lose yo' arter all, Marse Frank," he chuckled. "But dis coon was mighty skeered about yo', 'deed he war."

CHAPTER XII.

A TERRIBLE FIGHT.

At the end of three uneventful days, Frank saw nothing of the sunken island, although he had searched in every direction for it.

As the air in the reservoirs was becoming exhausted, he sent the clipper to the surface to replenish their supply.

It was a hot afternoon when the sea engine rose to the surface, and the water was as smooth as glass.

Barney was playing his fiddle in the kitchen and Pomp was thumping an accompaniment on his banjo, while Hunt had gone back in the engine room to start the dynamo recharging the jars of battery, and to get the air-pump working.

The boat had risen close to the coast of India.

Frank flung open the window and peered out.

Near the shore a trading ship with an English flag up was drifting along with the tide, her sails hanging flabby and useless from the yards, as there was no wind.

On her deck the sailors were lounging around smoking and talking, as they had absolutely nothing to do.

It was a warm, lazy, listless scene, backed up by the dark green verdure lining the flat shore.

For several moments Frank watched it.

Then he caught sight of a flotilla of canoes in a small lagoon, filled with half naked Hindoos.

He wondered what they were doing there, and was upon the point of hailing the crew of the ship, when suddenly he saw the whole flotilla dart out of the bay.

They paddled straight for the ship.

A yell arose from the sailors when they saw the black fellows, and a scene of intense excitement at once ensued.

Their cry was taken up by the Hindoos.

Finding that they were discovered in the act of attacking the vessel, they now began to discharge their fire-arms at the ship.

That left no doubt of their warlike intentions.

They were evidently intent upon capturing the vessel for plunder, and the misfortune was that there were very few fire-arms on board, in the hands of the crew, so that there was every probability of the Hindoos getting the best of them.

There were a dozen of the canoes, and each one contained ten or eleven men, every one of whom were armed with muskets and pistols.

A hail of bullets flew around the becalmed ship.

The sailors had dodged down behind the bulwarks, the watch below came rushing up on deck alarmed by the reports, and the captain and mates were issuing orders to the men to secure such arms as were aboard and repel the blacks.

"There will be a massacre aboard of that craft unless I do something to assist those poor fellows," Frank muttered.

Barney and Pomp heard the shots and yells.

They stopped playing the fiddle and banjo, and hastened into the turret asking Frank what the trouble was.

"Is it a ruction yer havin'?" the Celt asked.

"No. Look out the window and you'll see the cause of the trouble."

"Lan' sakes!" roared Pomp, "dey's a lot ob coons gwine fo' ter kill dem yers sailors on de ship!"

"They mean to plunder the vessel, no doubt."

"Faith, it's a helpin' hand we must be afther givin' thim."

"Fo' shuah!" assented Pomp.

"Call Hunt to help you, boys," said Frank. "Then arm yourselves, get on your metal suits, and man the port holes!"

The coon and the Irishman nodded and hurried out.

Frank then steered the sea engine toward the canoes, and the men on the ship began to discharge the few weapons they possessed, and a furore of voices arose on all sides.

"Those Hindoos are bad men!" Frank thought. "They will fight like demons to get possession of the ship."

He saw that some of them were bound to reach the ship before he could, and closing the window, he shouted:

"I'm going under water!"

"All roight, me lad!" responded Barney.

"When I give you the order, open the ports."

"Very well" answered the Irishman.

Frank thereupon submerged the Clipper, and putting on full speed when she was buried, sent her on like a locomotive.

She rushed through the brine and soon reached the canoes.

Then up she rose beneath two of them.

Over went the dugouts, spilling their occupants into the water.

Several of the boats by this time had reached the trader, and their dusky crews were boarding her.

The crew of the ship were ranged along the bulwarks firing and beating the Hindoos back with capstan bars, marlin spikes, belaying pins and musket barrels.

Some of them had cutlasses, with which they created frightful damage to the heads of the natives.

A chorus of howls escaped the capsized natives when they saw the Clipper, and they swam away from her.

They thought she was some huge, deep sea monster.

"Ready, boys!" shouted Frank.

"All ready!" answered Hunt, cheerily; "shall we fire?"

"Pick off the ones attacking the ship!"

"Look out fer ther whoite min an' hang ther nagurs!" roared Barney, as he began firing.

Pomp was not quite pleased at the manner in which this speech was delivered, but said nothing.

The three then poured a dangerous fire out at the Hindoos.

The screams that now arose were horrible, as many of the Hindoos fell back into the water.

Presently they saw the Clipper rushing toward them.

So did the ship's crew, but they realized that the Clipper was some sort of metallic vessel, the crew of which was coming to their rescue.

The sea engine frightened some of the black men so that they paddled away, but a large party of them had swarmed up over the bulwarks, had gained the deck and were fighting the crew.

An awful combat then began.

As the Clipper rushed up to the flotilla of canoes her terrible blade struck them, sweeping some aside, capsizing others, and striking others with the force of a battering ram.

The shots from the pneumatic repeating rifles, wielded by the inmates of the boat, were creating terrible havoc among the Hindoos, and those who could hastened to get away.

Frank brought his boat to a pause beside the ship.

All of the canoes had been driven away, and many of their occupants were swimming in the water.

The natives who had reached the deck were fighting like demons to master the crew, and several of the sailors fell from the terrible blows they received.

It was time they had assistance.

It was impossible to fire among the crowd, as some of the white men might have been struck by the bullets.

Frank therefore shouted to his friends:

"Have you got on your armor?"

"Yassah," answered Pomp.

"Then board the ship and help them."

Out hastened the three at once, and getting upon the deck of the other vessel, they went to the sailors' assistance.

Many shots were fired at them by the Hindoos, and many blows were dealt them but no damage was done.

The metal suits made them invincible.

Every shot they returned told among the ranks of the natives.

Frank cast a glance out at the men in the water.

The blacks in the canoes were paddling away with all their might, and the ones in the water swam after them.

In order to keep up their race to the landward, Frank opened the window and discharged several shots after them from a brace of pistols.

The movements of the fugitives were greatly accelerated by this fusillade, and Frank finally desisted.

He saw that the men on the ship now had no means of reaching the shore except by swimming, for the canoes in which they came had been driven away, overturned, or smashed to pieces by the blade of the sea engine.

The Hindoos knew this, too.

It rendered them very desperate.

They knew that unless they conquered the ship's company, they would be cut down to a man by the sailors.

Consequently they fought furiously.

Seeing that he might be of some assistance, Frank armed himself, and going up on deck, he began to pour a most disastrous fire upon such of the natives as he could hit.

Seeing this reinforcement, the blacks finally became panic-stricken, and rushed to the bulwarks on the side where Frank was, and sprang over.

Observing them coming, the young inventor made a rush for the trap door to get inside.

Before he could so, several of the blacks leaped down on the deck, and one of them striking Frank, knocked him overboard.

A yell escaped the Hindoos.

Several of them rushed down into the interior of the boat, and one of them, attempting to follow, shut down the trap with a bang.

Finding that he could not get in, the man leaped into the water, which was dotted with the heads of many of his companions.

Here he struck close to Frank.

Recognizing the young inventor, the negro clutched him.

They began a fearful struggle.

The young inventor might have got the best of his man, had not more of the blacks seen them and come swimming up to them and grasped him.

Beset on all sides, Frank was in a dangerous strait.

A dozen hands seized him on all sides, and the Hindoos pushed him down under the water.

A chill of horror passed over Frank.

"They mean to drown me!" he muttered.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EFFECT OF LIQUOR.

EVERY one of the Hindoos had by this time been driven from the deck of the trading ship.

As no canoes remained, they had to swim.

Barney, Pomp and Hunt saw the black horde around Frank pushing him under the water to drown him.

They therefore fired at the rascals and drove them away yelling furiously, several of their number badly wounded.

Frank came up, puffing and blowing, and struck out for the Clipper, upon which he hastily clambered.

He had seen the three men get into her, and shouted the fact to his armored friends.

They came down, entered the boat, and drove the blacks out of the sea engine, when they sprang overboard.

As they swam away Frank went in.

By this time all the blacks had been put to flight.

A breeze now sprang up, for the sun had begun to go down, and filling the sails of the becalmed English ship, she glided away from the shore.

Her crew and officers shouted their thanks to Frank and his friends, and as the inventor saw that they were no longer in danger he went into the turret.

The air-chambers by this time were filled, and the batteries recharged, so Frank sent the boat under again to continue her search for the sunken island.

By this time she had worked her way considerably to the south of where she had first began the search.

All her work had been done at considerable distance from the land, and Frank now resolved to hug the shore closer.

"Oscar Hunt might have been mistaken about the distance separating the island from the main," he thought.

The sailor had entirely recovered from the knife wound he received in Reacastown, and felt like himself again.

Unfortunately for him, his former thirst for liquor returned, and on the morning after they submerged, he asked Frank for a drink.

"I do not allow any drinking to excess upon my boats," the inventor answered him. "But if you want one drink, you will find a bottle of whisky in the locker in the store-room."

"Oh, I don't wish to keep up the practice," said the sailor. "On the contrary, I wish to break it off if I can. I used to be a pretty hard drinker when I was a sailor. Recently, though, I have kept away from it, Mr. Reade."

"Go and help yourself," Frank remarked. "But remember—no getting drunk here—I warn you, sir."

Hunt nodded and went back to the store-room.

Finding the bottle, he took a drink.

He was going to replace it, when he took another drink.

Then he started to return to the pilot-house, when a most irresistible desire took possession of him to take a third drink.

He fought off the feeling for a while.

Then he irresolutely went back and got what he wanted.

Not being accustomed to it recently, he quickly felt the effect of the liquor in his head, especially so as he had taken a large quantity each time he imbibed.

As soon as he realized that he was getting under the influence of the liquor, he pulled his faculties together and striving to hide it returned to Frank.

The young inventor darted a keen glance at him.

So well did Hunt conceal the condition into which he was getting that Frank did not notice it.

"Well, did you get the whisky, Hunt?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, and prime stuff it is, too."

"It is your trick at the wheel now."

"Very well, sir."

Frank left the sailor in charge of the boat and walked out.

Hunt grasped the spokes and peered out the window.

The conviction soon dawned upon him that he was getting drunk—very drunk indeed.

He tried to fight off the feeling.

"This won't do," he muttered in alarm. "He has left me in charge of the boat. It is a responsible task. If the liquor gets the best of me, I'll be in a deuced awkward plight. I wish it wasn't my turn on duty. But I don't dare confess to Reade that I've taken too much. He would get angry at me."

He whirled the wheel, and kept his glance on the water.

It soon began to dance and swim unsteadily before his eyes, and a weak, rocky feeling began to take possession of his legs.

A number of porpoises began to play around the outside of the boat, racing along with her, rolling over on their backs, dodging under her hull on one side and coming up on the other, and acting altogether like sportive children.

Their antics were were very amusing.

The search-light made their oily bodies gleam and glisten, and seemed to have a great fascination for them.

Hunt became very much interested in the playful fish.

A dark cloud suddenly made its appearance ahead, and they swam rapidly away.

It was a school of mackerel.

There were thousands of them.

So dense was the mass that the sea engine had to force her way through them, and hundreds of the fish were killed.

The cause of this school flying in that manner soon became manifest, for Hunt now caught view of a dozen or more huge tunny-fish in pursuit of the mackerel.

They were devouring the small fish as fast as they reached them.

"Lord, what hungry creatures!" muttered the sailor, as he watched the slaughter going on. "I see that all the big fish in the ocean devour the little ones—the strong always attack the weak from the largest to the smallest."

The boat finally left the mackerel astern.

She now reached a rocky section.

Floating vines that clung to the bottom by delicate tendrils filled the water with their wavy arms everywhere.

All the rocks bristled with clams, oysters and mussel shells. There were large clusters of meandrina coral scattered over the interstices like great foot-balls, and tufts of wiry stubble grass dotted the crevices.

Great cracks in the ground were seen.

These gaping fissures, in places, widened out until they assumed the forms of vast ravines.

It was impossible to see the bottom of these yawning pits, for they extended hundreds of feet into the earth.

They made Hunt shudder.

"S'pose," he muttered, "s'pose the boat should—hic—tum'le down into one of zose—zose—those holes? Zhat—that would be zhe—zhe lash of her!"

His tongue was getting thick from whisky.

The boat left the rocky plateau.

Then Hunt had a remarkable experience with his eyes.

He saw a large codfish.

Suddenly it seemed to become two fishes.

Then the finny beauties began to flip up and down.

At one moment they seemed to stand on their heads then on their tails, then they flew through each other, and finally they vanished, whereupon the sea began to move to and fro with the greatest rapidity.

Hunt shut one eye and puckered up his mouth.

"Mosht remark'ble shing," said he, in amazement. "Any one—hic—would shink I wush gettin' loaded."

He braced up with comical gravity, and began to whirl the wheel in the most reckless manner.

The sea engine ran wildly in all directions.

Her movements amused the sailor, and he soon became so much interested that the wilder he could make her go the better pleased he became.

Finally he began to nod and blink.

He was getting sleepy.

His eyes soon closed, and he let go the wheel and lying down upon the floor he fell fast asleep.

The boat was thus allowed to take her own course.

She rushed ahead at a rapid rate of speed, curving first one way and then another.

Not infrequently great rocks loomed up ahead and on each side of her, threatening to wreck her.

How she escaped them was simply a miracle.

The drunken sailor slept on in blissful ignorance of the danger they were in, and soon began to snore.

Frank and the others were so busy in the other rooms they did not think of going into the turret.

They therefore remained ignorant of what was transpiring.

The Clipper was then sunk to a depth of one hundred feet, and as she went across a vast depression the bottom vanished from sight below.

In a short time there loomed up a big elevation that towered high above the boat.

She was rushing straight toward it.

There was no avoiding a collision.

On she rushed, and in a few moments she reached it, and the big blade struck the flinty rock.

There came a crash as it was bent and snapped off.

Plunging on, the Clipper's bow next struck and was buried deeply into the ground.

The shock alarmed Frank, Barney and Pomp.

Oscar Hunt opened his eyes.

A vague impression was upon his mind of the fact that some dreadful catastrophe had occurred.

It partially brought him to his senses.

He staggered to his feet, and glaring wildly out the window, saw that the boat had plunged into the ground.

A thrill of alarm passed through him.

Just then the door flew open, and Frank, Barney and Pomp rushed into the turret.

CHAPTER XIV.

FINIS.

"HUNT, you're drunk!"

"No, I ain't—sober as a judge."

"You was drunk then!"

"I admit the impeachment."

"See what it has led to."

"I give you my word I'll never do it again."

"No, for I'll never again give you the chance."

"This is lesson enough for me, sir. I won't forget it."

"Barney, is the boat injured any?"

"Shure, ther hull is all roight, but ther blade's off."

"Whereabouts are we?"

"Faix, it's a mountain we've run inter."

"Is the prow buried deeply in the ground?"

"Can't tell widout goin' outside an' luckin'!"

"Then I'll put on a diving suit and attend to it myself."

Frank motioned to Pomp to accompany him, and they got ready and left the Clipper.

They soon reached the ground.

Here they found the prow of the sea engine caught between two rocks that held her in a vise-like grip.

"I'll have to blast that rock to get her free," Frank muttered as he examined it.

Then he glanced around to motion to Pomp, when to his alarm he saw the darky struggling in the grip of an octopus.

The big fish had silently approached the darky and wound one of his tentacles around him.

It then hastened up the side of the hill with him.

A cry of alarm escaped Frank, and he hastened after the devil fish and its struggling victim.

Up the hill went the horrible object to the top, and there it vanished from sight.

When Frank reached the top, he observed that he was on a large flat plateau.

Here Pomp was fighting the octopus.

The darky was armed with a knife, and severed the tentacle that held him, just as Frank reached his side.

The other arms of the devil fish were wound around him, but Frank just then attacked it with his knife.

In a few moments they killed the octopus.

As it fell to the ground, a stream of water gushed into the young inventor's diving suit, through a tear the octopus had made in it with one of its tentacles.

He clapped his hand over the spot, and thus checked the ingress of the water, saving himself from drowning.

Pomp saw what the trouble was.

Frank had sat himself upon the ground to examine the tear better.

As he attempted to arise, a bright sparkle in the sand attracted his attention, and he picked up the stone that emitted it, when he saw that it was a big rough diamond.

Frank was startled.

He glanced around.

Now a peculiar scene met his view.

He saw that the plateau they were on was covered with upright sandstone slabs at a short distance away.

"The sunken diamond mine!" he gasped.

Satisfied that accident had brought them to the very place they were seeking, Frank got upon his feet.

Followed by Pomp, he went back to the boat.

Once they were inside he took off his suit, and as Barney and Hunt approached him, he said:

"I've found it."

"Found what?" Barney asked.

"The sunken diamond mine."

"What!" cried Hunt, in startled tones.

"Look at this diamond."

He handed them the stone he picked up.

Both were amazed and delighted, and Hunt said:

"After all, it was lucky I drank that liquor."

"Yes," assented Frank. "If you hadn't, we might never have found the sunken island. This must be it into which the sea engine ran. It's top is covered with just such sandstone shafts as you described to us."

Oscar Hunt turned to Barney and Pomp.

"You see," said he, "how you both wronged me by doubting my story. Of course it was a risk to place confidence in a perfect stranger. But I told the truth."

"Faix, I'm sorry I disbelaved yer," frankly said Barney.

"An' me, too, chile," said Pomp, in candid tones.

This was equal to an apology, and the sailor was satisfied.

He then said:

"Shall we all go up there now after the diamonds?"

"No," answered Frank. "We must first liberate the boat. Then we will float her up on the plateau."

He put on another diving suit, provided himself with blasting utensils and went out aloae.

Having arranged a cartridge where it would break the rock without injuring the boat, he fired the blast.

It freed the Clipper.

Her big blade was gone, but the hull remained intact.

Frank then went to the top of the deck, and Barney raised the boat up on the plateau.

She came to a pause in the center of it.

Here Hunt, Barney and Pomp left her in diving-suits, provided with such implements as the sailor deemed necessary to get the diamonds out of the ground.

The first thing Hunt did was to look for the rock under which he said he had buried the stones he collected.

After some trouble the place was found.

Here he produced the diamonds.

There was a large number of them.

They were put aboard the sea engine, and then the real work began in earnest.

Our friends had a difficult task, for it was necessary to mine into the crust of the island to find the gems.

The most expeditious way to do this was to blast up the ground with dynamite cartridges and then examine the broken ground afterward for the gems.

The work was prosecuted in this manner and several weeks passed by, during which time our friends were obliged several times to go to the top in the boat for air.

The first time they ascended they looked for the mountain with the fiery top which Hunt said marked the coast.

But nothing was seen of it.

There was a range of hills on shore, but nothing else like a mountain such as Hunt described.

Many large and valuable diamonds were unearthed on the sunken island, and our friends prosecuted the search until the entire surface had been blown up and examined.

Of course they failed to find vast numbers of the gems that lay buried in the ground.

But they succeeded in getting enough to pay them all very handsomely for the work they were put to.

At the expiration of a month they were obliged to desist, for Pomp had told them that their supply of food and provisions was running dangerously low.

An account was then taken of their collection, and they found that they had enough of the gems.

They therefore abandoned the place.

Sending the sea engine to the surface one pleasant day, they drove her in shoreward toward a coast town.

Here a fresh supply of food and water was secured, and Frank said to the English merchant of whom they made their purchases:

"Do you know anything about a volcanic mountain ever having been seen near here?"

"Why, yes," was the unexpected reply. "Back in that range of hills there was less than a year ago a large volcano. During an eruption the mountain settled down gradually until it was on a level with the rest of the hills. The crater is there yet, but the volcano is extinct."

Frank was satisfied.

Hunt's assertion was proven true.

He told his friends what he learned.

They then started the sea engine for home.

It was a long and uneventful voyage that followed, the boat riding the surface in calm weather and going under the sea in storms.

They finally reached Readestown.

Here they debarked with the diamonds, and the young inventor's mechanics were ordered to stow the boat away.

Unluckily, however, one of the dynamite cartridges exploded in the sea engine, and she was blown to pieces.

No one was hurt by the accident, and as Frank had no further use for her, he did not grieve for she had earned him much more than it cost to build her.

The diamonds were sold, and a large fortune was realized from the sale, which the four divided.

By the consent of all Frank kept the big sapphire he had taken from the submerged idol as a curiosity.

Oscar Hunt then left our friends.

Frank and his companions were well satisfied with the result of their voyage, but the active mind of the inventor could not keep quiet any length of time.

The result was that he was soon afterward contriving a new invention, and it finally turned out to be a great success.

Of course, such inventions as Frank Reade, Jr., devised, necessitated a voyage one way or another. He was destined to meet with the most thrilling adventures with the new contrivance. We have an account of his new invention in readiness in this library, and next week shall have it before our readers. Until then we will leave the trio.

[THE END.]

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